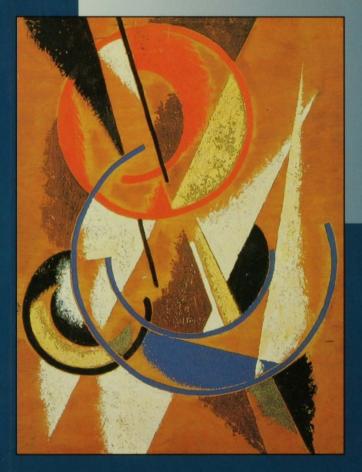# Studying Organization

Theory & Method

Edited by
Stewart R. Clegg
and
Cynthia Hardy

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STEWART R. CLEGG
AND CYNTHIA HARDY

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Stewart dedicates this book to Lynne who, as ever, was a great help in so many ways, but also to Jonathan and William as well as Bill and Joyce

Cynthia dedicates this book to all the wonderful friends she leaves behind in Canada and all the friends – old and new – she joins in Australia

Contents

Contributors

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Gibson Burrell is Professor of Organizational Behaviour at Warwick Business School and Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Warwick. He is editor of the journal *Organization* and has recently completed a book entitled *Pandemonium* which explores some undeveloped themes in organization theory.

Marta B. Calás is Associate Professor of Organization Studies and International Management at the School of Management of the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. She was born in Cuba and has lived and worked in various countries. Prior to her current position she was Professor and Associate and Acting Dean of the School of Business at the University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez. The exile experience has facilitated for her a nomadic position from which to write and teach about the intersections between organization studies and postmodern, feminist and postcolonial theorizing.

In their collaborative scholarly work Marta B. Calás and Linda Smircich apply perspectives from cultural studies and feminist theories to question current understandings of organizational topics such as leadership, business ethics, and globalization. They are the Americas' co-editors of the new journal *Organization*. Their articles and book chapters have appeared in several national and international publications. They are the editors of two recent volumes, *Critical Perspectives on Organization and Management Theory* and *Post-Modern Management Theory*.

Stewart R. Clegg moved to Australia for a job in 1976 and has been there ever since, apart from an interregnum in Scotland in the early 1990s. He has held a Chair in Sociology at the University of New England, 1985–9; a Chair in Organization Studies at the University of St Andrews, 1990–3; and the Foundation Chair of Management at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, 1993–6. Currently he is a Professor in the School of Management, University of Technology, Sydney. He was a founder of APROS (Asian and Pacific Researchers in Organization Studies) in the early 1980s, and has been the co-editor of *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, as well as editor of a leading European journal, *Organization Studies*. He serves on

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Colin Eden is Professor and Head of the Department of Management Science at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. Following an early career as a construction engineer, he moved to the University of Bath where he developed the use of cognitive mapping as the basis of a group decision support system for organizational problem solving. Since moving to Strathclyde, Colin's work has focused on strategy development and implementation and he has worked extensively with teams of senior managers in public, private and community sector organizations. His research in group

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John Hassard was Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the University of Keele, England, and in 1998 took up a professional appointment at UMIST, in the Manchester School of Management. Before joining Keele, he was Fellow in Organizational Behaviour at the London Business School. His recent books include *Time, Work and Organization* (1989), *The Sociology of Time* (1990), *The Theory and Philosophy of Organizations* (1990), *Sociology and Organization Theory* (1993), *Postmodernism and Organizations* (1993) and *Towards a New Theory of Organizations* (1994). Professor Hassard is currently researching organizational change in manufacturing companies in China and the Czech Republic, and compiling a historical analysis of *cinéma vérité* studies of work and occupations.

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Linda Smircich is Professor of Organization Studies and was Acting Chair of the Management Department at the School of Management of the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. Originally from Long Island, New York, she was always interested in anthropology, but instead of going off to some distant locale, she stayed in the Northeast and has ended up studying some interesting natives: organizations and their management. The collaborative work of Linda Smircich and Marta B. Calás is described in the biography of the latter.

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Preface

This volume derives from the 1996 *Handbook of Organization Studies*. Originally, the *Handbook* was launched primarily for a research audience. Since its launch, the book's success has led to many requests for a paperback edition, particularly in a format that instructors and students might use. Recognition from the American Academy of Management which honoured the *Handbook* with its 1997 George R. Terry award for 'the most outstanding contributions to the advancement of management knowledge' has further increased interest in the *Handbook*. Accordingly, the editors and the publisher decided to launch a paperback version in 1999.

We decided to split the *Handbook* into two volumes. We wanted to produce a paperback version that would be more practical for teaching purposes. On the other hand, we also wanted to preserve the original integrity and structure of the *Handbook*. Volume 1 consists of the original Parts One and Three. It focuses on theoretical issues and the link between theory and practice. Volume 2 consists of the original Part Two and focuses on substantive organizational issues. Of course, there is some overlap between these categories but, nonetheless, each volume stands as a coherent entity with appeal to particular audiences.

The editors would like to thank Rosemary Nixon and the wonderful team at Sage, in both the UK and the US, who did so much to ensure the success of this project. We would also like to thank the contributors once again. We should point out that they did not have the opportunity to update their chapters owing to the pressures of the publication deadline. The desire to make the paperback version of the *Handbook* available as quickly as possible precluded revision. It was more important to make the existing material more readily available than to engage in the lengthy process of overhauling thirty, still very current, chapters.

Stewart R. Clegg and Cynthia Hardy

Introduction

STEWART R. CLEGG AND CYNTHIA HARDY

In the introduction we set the scene for this book. We first provide an overview of how the theory and practice of organization studies have changed over the last thirty years. We then define what we take organization studies to be in the light of those changes. We revisit some key theoretical debates in more detail since many of the chapters refer to them. We also draw attention to some of the major changes that have marked organizational practices, to which, if it is to have any application, theory must refer. It is within this theoretical and practical context that the chapters were written and, by drawing out some important themes, we hope to orient readers, especially those who are new to organization studies. We then explain the substance of the volume: why it is organized the way it is and why it contains the chapters it does. Finally, we will turn our attention to the readers: who they are and how they might make sense of the project.

CHANGES

What is the world like today? How has it changed? What does it mean for the study of organizations? If we cast our minds back to the mid 1960s,[1] we remember that the Vietnam War was starting to heat up while the Cold War was still frigid; in Europe the Berlin Wall had only recently gone up, while in Asia and the Caribbean the dominoes were threatening to come down; in the USA, the civil rights movement was in full swing and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement was gaining momentum; in Asia, Mao's Cultural Revolution was imminent and India and Pakistan were at war; in Africa, Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence broke colonial

ranks, while to the south, Nelson Mandela had just started a prison sentence that would last a quarter of a century. Most organizations were still premised on instruction and surveillance through personal, written or verbal, communication, and relied on professional discretion to monitor the less routinizable areas of organization life. Hierarchies were the norm, personal computers had not been invented, and the only mode of instantaneous communication was the telephone. The new technologies that were to challenge radically accepted organization designs seemed unthinkable.

Since that time, things have changed. Consider the implosion of communism, the explosion of neo-conservativism, the eradication of apartheid, the advance of feminism, the erosion of US commercial dominance and the volatile ebb and flow of East Asian economic power. Note the emergence of the virtual, the network, the global and the postmodern organization. There are, as we approach a new millennium, many new phenomena, new conditions, new entities, even new organizations, for organization theorists to explore.

The last thirty years have not only changed the terrain, they have also produced new approaches and concepts. Three decades ago, an 'orthodox consensus' (Atkinson 1971) seemed to be emerging in organization theory concerning the role of functionalism, by which we mean an approach premised on assumptions concerning the unitary and orderly nature of organizations. Functionalist research emphasizes consensus and coherence rather than conflict, dissensus and the operations of power. The key concept is that of the organization as a 'system' which is functionally effective if it achieves explicit goals formally defined through rational decision-making. Man-

agement's task, according to this view, is to define and achieve these goals; the researcher's task is to collect objective data concerning the way in which the organization functions around goal orientation and maintenance. Typically, the research method follows the normal science model, in which the nature of organizational reality is represented and expressed through a formal research design; quantitative data facilitate validation, reliability, and replicability; a steady accumulation and building of empirically generated knowledge derives from a limited number of theoretical assumptions.

Different theoretical approaches, such as population ecology, organizational economics, contingency theory, among others, have evolved under the dual umbrella of functionalism and normal science, both of which remain driving forces in organization studies today. Meanwhile, a plethora of alternative approaches emerged, which directly challenge the supremacy of functionalism and normal science. Marsden and Townley (Chapter 17) call these approaches 'contra' science since they aim at critiquing and replacing the assumptions, approaches, and methods of normal science.

One important trigger of these alternative approaches in the British context was the publication of David Silverman's (1971) *The Theory of Organizations*, whose interpretative emphasis countered the functionalist view. It opened a Pandora's box, releasing actors as opposed to systems; social construction as opposed to social determinism; interpretative understanding as opposed to a logic of causal explanation; plural definitions of situations rather than the singular definition articulated around organizational goals. In the USA, Karl Weick's (1969) book *The Social Psychology of Organizing* provided another impetus for alternative work by focusing attention on the processes of organizing, rather than those entities called organizations, using similar phenomenological resources to Silverman (1971). The publication of Braverman's (1974) study of 'the labour process' brought the concerns of Marxist thinking on to the organization studies agenda, reinforcing concerns with conflict, power and resistance (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Littler 1982; Burawoy 1979; Knights and Willmott 1990). The framework offered by Burrell and Morgan (1979) in *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* identified functionalist, interpretativist, radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms. It provided a sense-making device to account for and locate these new approaches, as well as carving out legitimate spaces in which they could flourish.

Elsewhere, in the broader realms of social theory, a radical change in social and political

thought was taking place under the rubric of 'postmodernism' (Laclau 1988). One of the first sightings of the 'post' phenomenon occurred when Leslie Fiedler (1967) tied the term to a series of radical antitheses to 'modern' trends in aesthetics. Huyssen (1984) later identified this sighting as the primogenesis of postmodernism. While resistant to definition (Jencks 1989), postmodernism has been identified as that which is marked by discontinuity, indeterminacy and immanence (Hassan 1985). Building on the pioneering work of intellectuals like Lyotard (1984), postmodern critiques coalesced around an antipathy to 'modernist' tendencies emphasizing grand narrative; the notion of totality; and essentialism.

The object of early postmodernist critiques clearly was Marxism. Here was a master narrative *par excellence*, the sweep of class struggle delivering a teleological 'end of history' in communist society; few categories could be more 'totalizing' than the notion of the 'mode of production' which was the key to explaining all social change everywhere. At the core of this theoretical project was 'class struggle', the essential fulcrum on which social and economic development occurred; individuals were visible only in so far as they were bearers of identities that their class position either ascribed, in which case their consciousness was 'authentic', or denied, in the case of 'false' consciousness.

Postmodern approaches challenge and invert each one of these assumptions: no grand narrative marks the unfolding of human histories. They are histories, not history: one must attend to local, fragmented specificities, the narratives of everyday lives. Any pattern that is constituted can only be a series of assumptions framed in and by a historical context. The great totalities like 'the economy' are merely theoretical artifacts. The evolution of dominant discourses from Christian religions, to sciences of the social, to histories of their constitution (Foucault 1972) shows only the contemporary vanity of humankind in placing the 'individual', a relatively recent and culturally specific category, at the centre of the social, psychological, economic, and moral universe. The subject, decentred, relative, is acknowledged not as a stable constellation of essential characteristics, but as a socially constituted, socially recognized, category of analysis. For example, no necessarily essential social attributes characterize 'men' or 'women'. Instead the subjectivity of those labelled as such is culturally and historically variable and specific.

As the status of the subject is challenged so, too, is that of the researcher. No longer all-knowing, all-seeing, objective or omnipotent, the researcher is forced to re-examine, in a reflexive

mode, his or her relation to the research process and the 'knowledge' it produces. No longer a disinterested observer, acutely aware of the social and historical positioning of all subjects and the particular intellectual frameworks through which they are rendered visible, the researcher can only produce knowledge already embedded in the power of those very frameworks. No privileged position exists from which analysis might arbitrate (see Chapter 7 by Alvesson and Deetz).[2]

WHAT ARE ORGANIZATION STUDIES?

These changes have major implications for our understanding of what organization studies constitute. Gone is the certainty, if it ever existed, about what organizations are; gone, too, is the certainty about how they should be studied, the place of the researcher, the role of methodology, the nature of theory. Defining organization studies today is by no means an easy task. Our approach is to conceptualize organization studies as a series of conversations, in particular those of organization studies researchers[3] who help to constitute organizations through terms derived from paradigms, methods and assumptions, themselves derived from earlier conversations.

But what are these conversations, what are they about and why do they exist? We believe they are evolving conversations, with emergent vocabularies and grammars, and with various degrees of discontinuity. Sometimes they are marked by voices from the centre of analysis and practice, sometimes they seem to come from left field, out of the blue. They reflect, reproduce and refute both the traditions of discourse that have shaped the study of organizations and the practices in which members of organizations engage. They relate to *organizations* as empirical objects, to *organization* as social process, and to the intersections and gaps between and within them.

Let us explain by starting with a premise: *organizations* are empirical objects. By this we mean that we see something when we see an organization, but each of us may see something different. For instance, we can refer to the World Bank as an 'organization', one with specific resources and capacities; with rules that constitute it; with a boundedness that defines it more or less loosely; with a history; with employees, clients, victims and other interested agents. These boundaries, these rules, this history, these agents must be enacted and interpreted, however, if they are to form a basis for action. For example, a rule has to be represented as

something enforceable and obligatory before it means anything, and it may mean nothing or it may mean many things, to members and their experience of everyday organizational life.

As researchers, we participate in these enactment and interpretation processes. We choose what empirical sense we wish to make of organizations by deciding how we wish to represent them in our work. Representation, by any device, always involves a choice concerning what aspects of the 'organization' we wish to represent and how we will represent it. For example, some see organizations as characterized by dimensions like formalization, standardization and routinization; others as exhibiting variation, selection, retention and competition; or incurring transaction costs; or distinguished by institutionalized cultures, or whatever. We would say that to the extent that organizations achieve representation in particular terms, they always do so as an effect of theoretical privileges afforded by certain ways of seeing, certain terms of discourse, and their conversational enactment. At the same time, these terms of representation are already ways of not seeing, ways of not addressing other conversational enactments, and hence, ways of not acknowledging other possible attributes of organizations.

How aspects of organizations are represented, the means of representation, the features deemed salient, those features glossed and those features ignored, are not attributes of the organization. They are an effect of the reciprocal interaction of multiple conversations: those that are professionally organized, through journals, research agendas, citations and networks; those that take place in the empirical world of organizations. The dynamics of reciprocity in this mutual interaction can vary: some conversations of practice inform those of the profession; some professional talk dominates practice; some practical and professional conversations sustain each other; others talk past, miss and ignore each other.

Consider, again, the example of the World Bank: it shows that there is no artificial separation between the conversations in, of and around organizations. It is not the case that one discourse belongs to science and another to everyday life, that one can inform or reform the other in some determinate way. 'The World Bank' implies conversations lodged within diverse discourses with different emphases about, among other things, the scientific efficacy and adequacy of various models of economic and social development. The strategies of science are integral to its strategies of organization but its strategies of organization are more than merely this one restricted conversation. There are also the conversations that constitute the

work of the members of the organization, con-
versations which implicate formal disciplinary
knowledges, such as 'marketing', 'research and
development', and all those other terms that
provide a lexicon of 'management'. Such con-
versations and their associated practices arrange
the organizational arena as a contested terrain:
one where scenes are configured, agencies
enrolled, interests translated, and work accom-
plished, a space in which the empirical object is
constituted. Such conversations, derived from
the disciplines, as well as from more local
knowledges and their reciprocal interaction,
shape the object, the *organization*.

So, whether located in the organization of an
academic specialism such as ours, or applied in
the constitution of actions that become the
analytical subject of such specialisms, the
insights of conversation, as a public phenom-
enon, something intersubjective and shared,
involve *organizing* as a social process. By this
we refer to the embeddedness of organizing
within distinct local practices, of language, of
culture, of ethnicity, of gender. There is always
someone who speaks and engages in conversa-
tion in order for a conversation to occur. These
individuals have identities that are implicated in
what is said, or not said. Speech is never dis-
embodied: there is always a subject who speaks,
even behind the most reifying organization
theorist or desiccated bureaucrat.

Organizations are thus sites of situated social
action more or less open both to explicitly
organized and formal disciplinary knowledges
such as marketing, production, and so on, and
also to conversational practices embedded in the
broad social fabric, such as gender, ethnic and
other culturally defined social relations, them-
selves potential subjects for formally organized
disciplinary knowledges, such as anthropology,
sociology, or, even, organization studies. Simi-
larly, this volume is a collection of voices
involved in the analysis of organizations, as
real objects, where the 'reality' of these objects is
constituted through diverse conversations of the
analysts and the analysands, where both prac-
tices are embedded socially in ways of being,
ways of organizing.

With this conceptualization of organization
studies, one can strive for reflexivity, by which
we allude to ways of seeing which act back on
and reflect existing ways of seeing. For instance,
feminism is both a social movement and an
intellectually organized discourse with many
conversations contained within it. The conversa-
tions inform each arena: sometimes they
constitute aspects of the other arena, and they
can be used to reveal lacunae in that 'other'
arena represented. Many research possibilities
reside in these reflexive relations. For example,

in studying organization concerned with equal
employment opportunity, one might want to
address its impact from within feminist dis-
course; or one might want to address the impact
of equal employment opportunity legislation on
the further bureaucratization of the human
resource management function within a sample
of organizations; or one might be interested in
the politics of implementation. None is a more
'correct' analysis than any other: they are
different possibilities. Like any good conversa-
tion, the dialectic is reflexive, interlocutive and
oriented, not to ultimate agreement, but to the
possibilities of understanding of, and action
within, these contested terrains. Contestation
occurs not only in the scenes of action in
organizations as empirical objects, for example
around gender relations, but also in the con-
flicting interpretations of these scenes afforded
by different theoretical, as well as 'lay' or
'practical', conversations. Where desired, this
contestation and associated reflexivity generate
difference, although frequently, both theorists
and practitioners have a practical interest in
closure, not in the continual iteration of further
choice. Practical foreclosure does not resolve
reflexivity: it suspends it, until the next dissenting
interpretation.

Readers are interpreters: to read is an active,
sense-making process. Through texts such as this
the reader has an opportunity to rethink his or
her own conversational practices as an organiza-
tion member. The dialectic moves to that
between text and the reader: readers make (and
change the) sense of words and make their own
representations, a theme to which we return in
the concluding chapter. Ultimately, the text is
important for what the reader gives to it, not in
how its various authors use it to reaffirm their
own subjectivity. Through their particular read-
ing, readers will find ways to employ aspects that
enable them to speak for themselves in terms of
their choosing.[4]

PARADIGMS AND POLITICS

The idea that organization studies should
comprise a parallel set of unrelated options,
different menus, and disconnected conversa-
tions, became part of an extremely influential
debate during the 1980s, in which the publication
of *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational
Analysis* (Burrell and Morgan 1979) was a first
step. At the time, the framework, which classi-
fied research on organizations according to
functionalist, interpretative, radical humanist
and radical structuralist paradigms, may have
seemed just a relatively straightforward way to

catalogue a limited number of available options for the study of organizations. But *Paradigms* was not proposed merely as a theory of knowledge: it was a means to carve out a protected niche where 'alternative' researchers could do their thing, protected from the criticisms of functionalists, free from what they saw as the necessity of having to try to explain their work to them. The key to this defensive strategy lay in the 'incommensurability' of the paradigms and the language differences that precluded communication among them.

> For those who see in functionalist science an exercise in intellectual imperialism, dominating organization studies both epistemologically and politically, the paradigmatic understanding of organization theory offers a way of legitimating approaches whose probity would be denied by functionalism . . . What it [incommensurability] implies is that each paradigm must, logically, develop separately, pursuing its own problematic and ignoring those of other paradigms as paradigmatically invalid and that different claims about organizations, in an ideal world, be resolved in the light of their implications for social praxis. (Jackson and Carter 1991: 110)

Paradigms thus issued a Janus-headed challenge to those interested in taking it up. On the one hand, *could* one bridge the language 'problem' to allow paradigms to communicate? On the other, *should* one bridge it or would that allow imperialists to invade and dominate the weaker territories?

The result was a frenzy of discussion on the subject in a three-cornered debate. One group of supporters of alternative paradigms felt the relativism of incommensurability too hard to bear. Academics trained in rational debate and the search for truth sought solutions to the incommensurability 'problem' through the use of sophisticated philosophical and linguistic discourse (e.g. Reed 1985; Hassard 1988; 1991; Gioia and Pitre 1990; Parker and McHugh 1991; Marsden 1993; Willmott 1993a; 1993b). A second group, including its creators (Burrell and Morgan 1979; also Jackson and Carter 1991; 1993), maintained a hard line on any bridge between the paradigms, requiring quasi-religious Paulinian conversion as the only way to move between them. The third group in the paradigm wars were the defenders of the 'orthodox' faith of functionalism and normal science (e.g. Donaldson 1985; Aldrich 1988). Polemics flourished between defenders and detractors (e.g. Clegg 1990; also see the debate in *Organization Studies* 1988).

Most of the discussion, both incisive and accusatory, occurred between members of the 'alternative' paradigms who share a discontent with the imperialistic tendencies of the dominant 'orthodoxy'. This debate kindled such a degree of heat that the protagonists appear less like different voices in one broad community separated by minor spats about doctrine, such as Catholics and Protestants debating the rite of communion, and more like Catholics and Protestants during the Protestant Reformation when heretics, Catholic and Protestant alike, were tortured, killed and consumed by fire. Crusades, jihads and fatwahs are the very stuff of historical encounters between religions, where incommensurability flourishes as a matter of course. An extreme example, perhaps (at least in many societies), but observers might see parallels in organization studies because, as Burrell points out in this book (Chapter 16), the paradigm reformists missed the point. The issue is not one of epistemology, logic or linguistic theory, it is one of politics: those defending incommensurability believe it to be the best way to protect alternative approaches from the continuing onslaught of mainstream approaches in their various and evolving forms; while many of those who attack it believe it to be counterproductive in such a defence. The main battles thus took place between the rebels.

In contrast, the engagement of most members of the 'orthodox' faith in the paradigm wars was muted; most inhabitants of the functionalist paradigm simply continued with business as usual. Perhaps they did not consider that *Paradigms* signalled a state of crisis, as heralded by the rebels (for example, Hassard 1988; Burrell, Chapter 16 in this book). Certainly, most of the United States journals ignored the upstart newcomers (Aldrich 1988) although whether this was because they were upstarts, newcomers, or aliens is not clear. Most adherents of the dominant paradigm saw little threat to their privileged position, quite possibly because the nature of the institutionalized practices of the academic and publishing arena in the US made inroads by 'alternative' researchers extremely difficult. The one defender of normal science who did enter the fray with gusto was Lex Donaldson (1985; 1988; 1995). He certainly felt an attack had been mounted, which is, presumably, one of the reasons behind his engagement with opponents he later claimed to have 'routed' (1988: 28), although the contents of this volume would indicate suspicion regarding such a claim.

Donaldson's position notwithstanding, most adherents of functionalist, normal science approaches pursued a strategy of isolationism, known in political economy as 'protectionism', as opposed to 'free trade'. At its extreme, however, it can lead to autarky: where trade occurs only between those within the common boundaries. Such overdeveloped protectionism rarely springs forth from some notion of 'pure'

commerce: usually there is a religious or some other ideological imperative about the profanity of exchange with the 'enemy'. Protectionism involves a political strategy of creating and policing borders; its claims to purity and morality are strengthened by something visibly 'dangerous' threatening those borders, as evidenced by Donaldson's (1985; 1995) strategies of defence.

Pfeffer (1993), for some pragmatic reasons, makes a similar plea for paradigm consensus.[5] It represents an overt attempt to re-establish the old elite's dominance over organization science (while denying any such elite exists). Pfeffer acknowledges that what constitutes consensus in a scientific field is a political affair.

> My sense is that such consensus [was] developed by a group of individuals forming a dense network of connection and unified view, who then intentionally and systematically took over positions of power and imposed their views, at times gradually and at times surreptitiously. There seems to be nothing in the natural order of things that suggests that mathematical rigor should be valued over empirical richness or realism. Rather, the criteria, the status hierarchy, and the enforcement of rules were and are very much political processes. (1995: 618)

Nonetheless, in order to attain consensus, which he believes is necessary to protect organization studies from 'hostile takeover' (1995: 618), Pfeffer advocates the establishment of a nexus of powerful gatekeepers (or perhaps 'bouncers' would be a better term) to screen out undesirable elements.

> Pfeffer requires blind faith and unquestioning adherence to a dogma decreed to be 'true' by the elites of organization studies. Even when surrounded by evidence that theory is incomplete, Pfeffer would have us ignore the evidence until it overwhelms us . . . Conformity to a central paradigm would require that we train ourselves and our students to ignore any work that strayed from the established [path] . . . Further, although Pfeffer's solution (restricting the entry of ideas decreed to be 'different') doubtless would increase the comfort level of those who are already established, it will also increase the costs of entry for new scholars and restrict innovative results on the output side. (Cannella and Paetzold 1994: 337–8)

Pfeffer argues that paradigm consensus facilitates communication which, in turn, furthers knowledge development. Such a position is ironic when you consider that he ignores most of the discussion of communication and language in that 'other' paradigm debate to which he does not refer. Pfeffer (1993) cites only Burrell and Morgan (1979); Donaldson (1985); Marsden (1993); not Reed (1985); Hassard (1988; 1991); *Organization Studies* (1988); Clegg (1990); Gioia

and Pitre (1990); Jackson and Carter (1991; 1993); Parker and McHugh (1991); or Willmott (1993a; 1993b). Evidently, what we have here is 'protectionism' for those intellectually and powerfully entrenched, designed to preserve the intellectual capital that forms the basis of their power. No surprise: collusion between traders, even in ideas, is rarely advanced for the benefit of any but the colluders, as Adam Smith (1904) was wont to observe.

Protectionism is not atypical of the broader intellectual establishment in the US, where the rationalist, quantitative, normative approaches associated with functionism and normal science have gained their strongest foothold. For example, a comparison of the different citation patterns found in *Organization Studies* and *Administrative Science Quarterly* for a matched period of coterminous publication found that the only European amongst 103 sources that received three or more citations in *ASQ* was Max Weber, who has been dead for most of the twentieth century. The European-based journal *Organization Studies*, on the other hand, was found to be far more catholic, with cites of scholars based both in North America and elsewhere (Üsdiken and Pasadeos 1995). Aldrich's (1988) finding that critical theorists had made a minimal impact on leading North American journals might be interpreted as an unwillingness of parts of the United States intellectual 'establishment' in organization theory to welcome new, contradictory and challenging ideas (Marsden 1993), especially when written by overseas scholars. It appears, then, that the heartland's response to incursions from further afield, both geographically and intellectually, has, at least in the past, been to deny either the reality or, if necessary, the legitimacy of the intruders' aspirations.

Protectionism is, however, a strategy of diminishing returns in these days of European, Pan-American and Asian free trade blocs. Today, while it cannot be said that normal science is an endangered species (or even a singular species), new ways of doing and thinking about research are emerging. For example, John Van Maanen's condemnation of the tyranny of the 'Pfeffer-digm' at the subsequent Academy of Management meeting is a case in point (also see Van Maanen 1995). Van Maanen (1979) edited a special issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly* on qualitative methodologies as early as 1979. Karl Weick and Steve Barley have been editor of *Administrative Science Quarterly*, neither of whom can be called practitioners of 'orthodoxy'.

Moreover, the pace to include work that falls outside narrower confines is increasing. Qualitative articles appear in the quantitative sanctum of the *Academy of Management Journal* (e.g. Dutton and Dukerich 1991; Elsbach and Sutton

1992); a special issue of which (vol. 36 no. 6, 1993) included such exotica as hermeneutics (Phillips and Brown 1993), symbolic interactionism (Prasad 1993) and textual deconstructionism (Gephart 1993). The winner of the Annual Conference of the Academy of Management's best paper award in 1994 was an ethnomethodological piece with a distinctly critical edge (Barker 1993). *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 1998 published a special issue on critical theory, while the *Academy of Management Review* had one earlier (vol. 17 no. 3, 1992). Compare this with the picture represented by Aldrich's (1988) analysis of citations. It would appear that there is no denying the alternative theorists; they are emerging as new tenants in the citadels of power.

To understand the paradigm debate, we must see it as a jostling for academic space by individuals with very different values, assumptions and agendas in a metaphorical joust: there are winners and losers, broken lances and deflected blows, colours and favours, queens and kings, knights and squires, barons and retainers, grand speeches and empty gestures. Paradigm protectionists advocate a deliberately political strategy to define organization studies by investing the old elite with the necessary power to screen out alternative approaches. Others, regardless of which side of the commensurability divide they happen to be on, try to carve out new space for these alternatives. We ally with the latter, since it informs our view of how organization studies are constituted, both empirically and normatively; we reflect thinking that emphasizes ambiguity, contradiction and difference rather than resolution, conformity and closure. Our methods thus hinge on a fundamental value of bringing in, not screening out, alternative views of organization. Such 'agnosticism' (Nord and Connell 1993) challenges the possibility of ultimate knowledge in an area of study. Agnostics value conversation, discourse, and open, cooperative inquiry across boundaries. Starting from one's own stream of consciousness and recognizing that others start from theirs, one attends to the context in which one's own experience and that of others are embedded. What is crucial to the agnostic view is the 'sense of accurate reception' (Nord and Connell 1993). We do not, therefore, wish to eradicate the practice of what passes for normal science or functionalism (even if it were possible), but we do believe that there are other significant approaches to the study of organizations to which we want to expose our readers.

It is in the struggle between different approaches that we learn (see Zald 1994), and from the diversity and ambiguity of meaning; not through the recitation of a presumed uniformity, consensus, and unity, given in a way that requires unquestioning acceptance. Many of the more fascinating debates have arisen in the interpretation of writers who have been notoriously difficult to interpret: for example the radical and functional divergences of Weberian writings stem from the difficulties in translating, both literally and metaphorically, key concepts, as do discussions that follow from what Foucault may or may not have said. These are occasions for revision, not reason for exclusion. Fragmentation creates a space for weaker voices (Hardy 1994) marginalized by institutionalization, centralization and concentration. Even the paradigm warriors risk simply multiplying one orthodoxy and one hierarchy by four. There will be room for more at the top, but there will also be more space to dominate. There lies only more orthodoxy, a changing of the guard perhaps, but the same old politics of glittering prizes and exclusion, as others who have clawed their way up to find *Room at the Top* (Braine 1957) have already noted.

We also question whether any favoured elite could make the correct choices in designating the areas to be researched and problems solved. Given that processes of choice inherently premise received assumptions, as well as what we know about resistance to change, elite members of the community are as likely to send us down the 'wrong' path as anyone else. Witness the lack of success of management theorists in solving contemporary business problems (e.g. Eccles and Nohria 1993). Researchers seeking professional legitimacy could quite easily be press-ganged into learning more and more about problems that are increasingly uninteresting or irrelevant; or investing more and more in solutions that do not work. In this way, even from a functionalist view, the management project would be doomed to failure because of an inability to function effectively from the point of view of the client. The positivist approach has not guaranteed success, even for the managers it purportedly serves, as Marsden and Townley point out in Chapter 17. The correctness of choice is something decided not by elite agendas (and more than one *ancien régime* has toppled as a result of such arrogance), but by the unfolding of both practical and political relevancies in changing contexts.

In summary, we resist strongly the notion of unity and singular direction and stand firmly apart from any attempt to screen out difference for the sake of a prior unity. Let us make clear, though, that this book is, of course, a political statement. To pretend otherwise would be either naive or duplicitous. Where we differ from more protectionist approaches is in our aim to illuminate and elaborate (notwithstanding the inevitable limits to our vision).

While celebrating diversity, we should point out the limits to struggle, such as that of the paradigm wars. No 'solution' will ever satisfactorily bridge the paradigms: as theories become ever more sophisticated in attempts to bridge the yawning chasm, the very basis of the theorizing becomes more vulnerable to criticism. For example, Kuhn, as Burrell points out in this book (Chapter 16), used the term 'paradigm' in at least twenty different ways: other writers debate whether critiques of *Paradigms* should draw on Kuhn at all, since the authors did not intend to use a Kuhnian version of 'paradigm' (e.g. Jackson and Carter 1993 critiquing Willmott 1993a). Still others level charges of misrepresenting or misunderstanding Kuhn (e.g. Cannella and Paetzold 1994 with respect to Pfeffer 1993) and point to differences between the earlier and later Kuhn (e.g. Hassard 1988; Burrell, Chapter 16 in this book). Given that the emphasis on language games as barrier or bridge draws on Wittgenstein and Derrida, the possibilities for reinterpretation are endless. These are theoretical resources conducive not to definitive resolution so much as to sophisticated debate, a 'speech conversation' (Habermas 1979) whose ideal is not closure but an infinite horizon of possibilities.

It is not to say that we will not learn from such erudite discussion but we are unlikely to find a 'solution' to the 'problem' of paradigm incommensurability. Even if we did find a 'solution', there is no guarantee that it would be accepted, not if it let down the defences that some individuals believe necessary to protect 'alternative' work. So, for these reasons we do not believe that the paradigm debate can be resolved here, or anywhere else for that matter. The paradigm debate may, then, have run its course. Perhaps it is time to move on.

FROM BUREAUCRACY TO FLUIDITY: NEW ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

Having considered some of the important changes in the world of academics, let us now turn to the world of organizations. Once upon a time, not so long ago chronologically, but at considerable intellectual distance, the theme of bureaucracy dominated organization studies. Weber (1978) systematized the concept of bureaucracy as a form of organization characterized by centralization, hierarchy, authority, discipline, rules, career, division of labour, tenure. It was the staple of the typological studies of the 1950s (see Clegg and Dunkerley 1980); it represented one of the most common archetypes of organization design (e.g. Chandler

1962; Mintzberg 1979); and it was the site of key case material for subsequent critiques (Silverman 1971; Reed 1985).

While none would deny the continued relevance and existence of bureaucracies for organizational life, and some have questioned the pervasiveness of postmodernity (e.g. Latour 1993), few would fail to acknowledge the emergence of new forms of organization. On the outside, the boundaries that formerly circumscribed the organization are breaking down as individual entities merge and blur in 'chains', 'clusters', 'networks' and 'strategic alliances', questioning the relevance of an 'organizational' focus. On the inside, the boundaries that formerly delineated the bureaucracy are also breaking down as the empowered, flat, flexible post-Fordist organization changes or, to be more accurate, *loses* shape. For some writers at least, these new organizational forms are sufficiently different from the bureaucratic features of modern organization to suggest the appellation of 'postmodern' (e.g. Clegg 1990).

The newly found fluidity in the external appearance of organizations rests on the assumption that the interorganizational relations into which an organization enters may be a more important source of capacity and capability than internal features such as 'size' or 'technology'. As a result, collaboration between organizations has become increasingly interesting to researchers. While not new (for example, Blackford and Kerr 1994: 203 note that 3,000 collaborative associations had been formed by US businesses by 1900), interorganizational collaboration has taken on growing significance as a potential way to solve both business (e.g. Astley 1984; Bresser and Harl 1986; Bresser 1988; Carney 1987) and social problems (e.g. Gray 1989; Waddock 1989). It takes a variety of forms: from 'collective' strategy (Bresser and Hart 1986) based on the formation of cooperative arrangements such as joint ventures (Harrigan 1985) and alliances (Kanter 1990); to network organizations (Powell 1990; Alter and Hage 1993); to modular corporations (Tully 1993; Winkleman 1993), where all non-core activities, from the cafeteria to all information technology and computer operations, are subcontracted to outsiders; to the virtual corporation (Byrne 1993) which exists only as a transient collection of 'superhighway' linkages between ephemeral entities that donate their core competences to a temporary collaboration.

One new form of interorganizational relations is linear chains that connect disparate organizations as, for example, where a lead firm imposes strict quality controls on subcontractors and subsubcontractors in the supply chains, as do many Japanese firms. Critical linkages can pressure

management to improve innovation, as in the construction of supply chains (McKinley Report 1993: 42). Creative use and shaping of the market through production linkages might focus, for instance, on consultative buyer/vendor relations, interfirm associations and extrafirm agencies that facilitate continuous improvement in production (Best 1990: 19–21). Value enhancement comes through a 'virtuous circle' of pressures in the chain, such as demands that suppliers meet quality standards. Governments may play a role in these relationships by institutionalizing 'best practices' and 'industry standards'.

Clusters often occur in industrial districts, where many small and medium enterprises cooperate at local level, specializing in phases that are all part of the same production cycle (Bianchi 1993; Pyke and Sengenberger 1992). Well established within industrial and artisanal traditions, these districts have also developed as a consequence of local state interventions, such as industrial districts in northern Italy (Weiss 1988) and Germany (Herrigel 1993). They may also result from government decisions to site a key industry in a particular area to establish an 'incubator' to encourage localized high-technology parks, where organizations with related technologies, competences, markets etc. are able to benefit from synergistic collaboration. Sometimes, incubators act as catalysts for small-business generated developments in a tightly focused geographical area and have a valuable role to play in regional programmes; in other cases they facilitate the transfer of technology and ideas from large organizations such as universities, government research bodies and large corporations to the marketplace by aiding the development of new business ventures.

Networks (e.g. Clegg 1990; Powell 1990; Alter and Hage 1993; Nohria and Eccles 1993) encompass a loosely coupled cellular structure of value-adding activities that constantly introduce new material and elements. They can take many different forms ranging from the formal to the informal; they may exist simply to exchange information or may be involved in an array of joint activities; they may be explicitly mediated by network 'brokers' or emerge from the initiatives of the firms themselves. Networks appear to have a number of advantages as a form of organizing, including: risk spreading and resource sharing to avoid costly duplication of independent effort, enhanced flexibility compared with other forms of integration, such as a take-over or merger, particularly where product life-cycles are short; increased access to know-how and information through collaborative relations before the formal knowledge stage.

Strategic alliances, as Barney and Hesterly note in Chapter 4, are increasingly becoming mechanisms to enter new markets, domestic and global. Owing to the substantial financial resources needed to develop new technology, more organizations are entering strategic alliances, often with competitors, while others are turning to their government to secure support. Strategic alliances often link multiple partners on an international basis. They offer more staid partners access to leading edge technical developments in new fields; while emerging organizations secure external assets crucial to bringing an innovation to a marketplace where 'size and financial muscle are critical for the long pull in an increasingly global economy' (Amara 1990: 145). Other important benefits include shared risks, accelerated technical progress, established market linkages and resources for subsequent product development. Such is the pattern in biotechnology (see, for example, Barley et al. 1993; Powell and Brantley 1993). Start-ups like Celltech and Genentech pioneered the application of novel recombinant-DNA technologies, while bringing such innovation to market was achieved through 'dynamic complementarity', the pairing of organizationally separate resources and skills.

Through a variety of ways and in a number of guises, argue advocates, these new organizational forms offer opportunities for more radical innovation, allowing organizations to 'reinvent the future' (Hamel and Prahalad 1994).

> [M]ore radical innovations require new organizational forms. It appears that new forms, initially, are better adapted to exploit new techno/market regimes, breaking out from existing regimes within which established corporations, for historical, cultural and institutional reasons, might be rather strongly bound. (Rothwell 1992: 234)

By maintaining, modifying and transforming multifaceted interorganizational relationships, organizations can construct their own environments, their own markets (e.g. Daft and Weick 1984) as they seek allies to which they can bond for periods of mutual benefit (Fairtlough 1994).

To be successful, however, new external relations require new internal ones. Consider a firm like Semco (Semler 1989), where the whole 'architecture' of the firm and the knowledge embedded in it was reconfigured in radically different ways. New relationships between existing organizations provide the comparative advantage of a clean slate, which enable them to manage 'transilience' (Abernathy and Clark 1985) or radical innovation more effectively. Established organizations, on the other hand, face far greater difficulty in overhauling what they do and how they do it (Cooper and Kleinschmidt 1986; Anderson and Tushman 1990) since radical innovation, by definition,

involves an overthrow of existing competencies. So, to offset the disadvantages of size even large, apparently bureaucratic, organizations are having to reconfigure their internal relationships.

Companies must also have both the mind-set and the organizational structures (or, sometimes, the lack thereof) to actively encourage cross-disciplinary teamwork, collaboration, and thus learning. And it is not only interdepartmental barriers which must be demolished; the firm's outer boundaries also need to be radically redefined so that suppliers, customers, and strategic alliance partners can become insiders and be tapped systematically for ideas and insight (Kiernan 1993: 9).

Consequently, the resulting 'postmodern' organization (Clegg 1990) looks a lot different from the traditional bureaucracy. First, it is decentralized:

> Competitive pressures, total quality management, the trend towards knowledge work, and time based competition are all business forces that create a need for decision making and staff support to be closer to customers and products . . . Businesses have to move from single profit centres to multiple profit-measurable units. In business units, general management decisions have to move to teams with direct product, project, or customer contact. As decision power moves to teams, the teams need additional knowledge, information and rewards that are tied to the businesses they manage. Finally, in work units employee involvement must move decisions to work teams. In all cases, faster decision making, control of quality at the point of origin, and delivery of service at the point of customer contact require that decisions be moved to lower levels, which in turn leads to focus on new, more distributed organizations, and the decline of hierarchy. (Galbraith et al. 1993: 285–6)

Second, such organizations are designed increasingly on a 'distributed' model (named in an analogy with distributed computing). Essentially, they consist of an internal network where activities which, in the old-style modern organizations, were centralized at corporate headquarters, are distributed around an internal network of divisions or units, linked through electronic forms of communication in a 'very communication-intensive organization . . . facilitated by modern information technology' (1993: 290). To guard against fissiparous tendencies a mutuality of interests has to be designed into the network. Advocates urge that leadership in the new organizational forms be team based, which will require skills in team building, conflict resolution and problem solving. Moreover, information, traditionally available only at the highest levels, must now be made available

through decentralized circuits to lower-level employees (1993: 297), relying on both 'hard' technological networks and 'soft', relational networking competence in and between organizations.

A third change concerns the nature of hierarchy: not its elimination, but its signification as a social order of rank, status and privilege that serves as 'impediments and barriers' preventing 'the flow of information, co-operation, decision making, and learning' (1993: 293). Instead, hierarchies become one means among many to coordinate and control actions across people, knowledge, time and space. The development of 'groupware' means that there now exist more immediate and interactive bases for coordination than simple hierarchy. Within hierarchical layers, pressures lead to increasing teamwork, premised less on jobs and job requirements and more on competencies. Such lateral organization depends on communication. These organizations are characterized by openness, trust, empowerment and commitment (Dodgson 1993; Fairtlough 1994). Once in motion, 'virtuous circles' have a multiplier effect: collaborative, open decision-making eliminates the inefficiency of traditional hierarchical styles of secrecy, sycophancy and sabotage. Decisions are based upon expertise, openly elicited and listened to by the organization.

The result is a very different organization compared with the bureaucracy and even with the matrix organization (Galbraith 1973) and adhocracy (Mintzberg 1979). Such postmodern, networked forms are fast 'becoming an organization of choice for many companies', raising the question of whether 'large size is necessary or desirable' (Galbraith et al. 1993: 290) now that networks generate a potency that stems from being big and small simultaneously. These changes pose a very different set of research questions to those that informed and stimulated past theoretical practices. The conception of the contingent relation between the size of an organization and its structural characteristics ceases to hold if the organization is a multiheaded, networked hydra. Japanese organizations such as Mitsubishi, with their different conditions of existence for legal ownership, have, since their inception, provided a model for these hydras. In this sense they were never 'modern' in the way that the organizations of Anglo-American-based business systems were (Whitley 1992). Ironically, the latter, which provided the manna for 'universal' theories of organizations, have been revealed by both comparative analysis and changing organizational practice to be neither universal nor necessarily effective.

OVERVIEW

Both the theory and practice of organizations have changed substantially in recent years. In both cases, the changes have led to increasing diversity and fluidity, and decreasing certainty and structure. As academics, we are less certain of what we do: there are more ways to do it; many of those new ways raise questions about how and, indeed, whether we should do it. In observing organizations, we are beset with a moving target: questions concerning what *is* the organization exist today in ways not envisaged thirty years ago. Such is the context in which the authors prepared their contributions for this book.

In noting and responding to these changes, we made choices concerning both the subjects and the authors we wished to include in this project. This book, ultimately, is *our* view of the terrain. Think of our 'map' of the terrain as being based on a series of more or less detailed photographs of the landscape. Nooks and crannies will appear (or fail to appear) as one surveys from different perspectives. The contributions in this book expose different aspects of the terrain chosen for inclusion in this portfolio of possible maps. It goes without saying that different editors would have made (some) different choices: their maps would be based on different photographs and emphasize different aspects of the landscape. They might miss some of the interesting formations that we see; conversely, they might see potential buried in the land that we have not.

The volume moves from the past to the present to the new questions that the *fin de siècle* poses for organizations and for us. Contingency theory is one of the most widely appropriated approaches in organization studies because of the analytical economy of a perspective that deals with a finite but flexible set of variables, such as environment, technology, and size, to account for variations in organizational design and effectiveness. While there are alternative claimants for the status of normal science, perhaps none is promoted so fiercely as contingency theory. Contingency theory, at root, is an organic analogy: the organization develops depending on features of its organic form and the environment that sustains them. It is not the only major research programme to take the organic analogy seriously. Organizational (including population) ecology, for instance, has been a major research programme in the last decade and particularly influential in the United States. It seeks explicit inspiration by drawing on biological and ecological models to explain organizational founding and failing, and matters of organizational change.

If biological and ecological models have been imported into organization studies, other sources of inspiration derived from economics and psychology. Hence, it is appropriate that economic and psychological approaches are also considered as part of the general framework of organization studies. There is a long history to their importation into organization studies, such as the early studies of the researchers into the Hawthorne Electric Plant (Mayo 1947; Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939), who sought to meld both 'psychological' and 'economics' variables in their understanding of the behaviour first of individuals and then of groups in organizations. Psychological approaches focus on the centrality of the individual to the organization; organizational economics addresses why organizations exist, how they should be managed and why some organizations outperform others.

From sociological traditions comes institutional theory, which had been an organizing device for a considerable programme of work which can be traced as far back as Selznick's (1957) classic case study of the TVA. Institutional theory shows how symbolic properties of organizations help them to secure support from external interests. Interpretative approaches owe much to anthropological traditions, offering considerable potential to areas of empirical enquiry. Subjectivist and humanistic assumptions mark interpretative approaches as premodern. Postmodernist approaches, which question the existence of grand theory, the centrality of the subject, and the ontological status of the social world, have a more recent pedigree, especially in so far as organization studies are concerned. Critical theories, which seek to reveal structures and processes of power and domination hidden in the legitimate and taken-for-granted aspects of our social world, can be traced back to the influential work of the Frankfurt School. Together, critical and postmodern approaches, which draw from themes that also concern the humanities, supply a creative tension that makes an important contribution to organization studies.

One area in which critical and postmodern approaches have flourished is feminism, a particularly diverse research agenda with which organization studies engaged only slowly. Here, more than anywhere else, we have a good example of the way that knowledge and practice interact, as issues of feminism as articulated in the form of interdisciplinary concerns within a broad social movement have been brought on to the agenda of organizations and organization studies.

While some of our contributors have reflected on the range of perspectives in organization studies, others reflect on research, theory and

practice and the relationship between them. The connection of theory and practice invariably draws on particular conceptions of what is to count and not to count as data. It is through data that we mediate between the concerns of members of organizations and members of organization studies. All the central issues of reliability and validity presume this relationship: what is to count as what kind of data?

From the practitioner's point of view, a great deal of research probably seems arcane and esoteric, but action research is one area which directly confronts the theory/practice relationship. Any investigation of the relation of theory to practice should consider the protocols of 'action research'. Action research requires some emotional investment in the organization being studied: to want to make a difference to the way the organization operates. Yet, traditionally, the emotional attachments of the researcher and the emotional life of organizations have rarely been central topics of organization research. As part of our brief to open up issues made critical by their relative neglect we chose to focus on emotions in organizations. We also consider aesthetics in a similar way. That organizations display aesthetics and that aesthetics enter into the very fabric of organizations are evident: in the very physical structure; spatial layout; architecture and design; dress codes that are encouraged or sanctioned; body styles that are promoted or relegated. In both subtle and overt ways organizations display a complex of aesthetic dimensions. Similarly, time is the essence of organization life. From scientific management to just-in-time, much of what organization achieves is accomplished through the increasing imposition of mechanical and abstract chronology on the rhythms of everyday life. Yet, typically, time has been taken for granted by the majority of organization theorists.

Culture has been a 'hot' topic in organization theory for a decade or so now. However, much of the interest has been prescriptive. The idea that a strong, unified culture is a 'good thing' has become widely accepted. However, when the 'culture wars' are unpacked, the certainties of this view dissolve: such treatments of this topic obscure more than they illuminate. The same might be said of power. Indeed, power is still widely regarded as something one does not talk about in polite company, like religion or sex. Perhaps it is the association with politics that generates this aura? Again, power is a topic whose relative neglect makes it critical, not only a negative but also a positive aspect of organization life.

For many organization theorists the explosion of reflexive awareness about paradigms, meta- phors, discourse and genealogies has been the most significant event of the last decade or so. Paradigms are implicit, tacit and unremarked; metaphors are used unselfconsciously as literal devices; discourse is a term that few would utter easily. Such genealogies of analysis would strike most practitioners as both irrelevant and bizarre, even though they have significant implications for practice. The final three contributions go to the heart of the theory/practice nexus. The authors argue that conceptions of organization theory clustered around various positivist and functionalist conceptions have not been particu- larly successful in their application in practice. Perhaps ironically, a different way forward lies with some of these approaches that are still relatively unfamiliar to the practitioners who might benefit from, as well as contribute to, them.

Frameworks for Analysis

Michael Reed's chapter provides an overview that frames the volume. He rediscovers the analytical narratives and ethical discourses shaping the historical development of organiza- tion theory. In so doing, Reed wishes to carve out a new road between 'intellectual surfing or free riding on the rising tide of relativism [and] retreating into the cave of orthodoxy'. As with many of the contributors, he locates theory building within its historical and social context, highlights the contradictory claims within different branches of organization studies, and shows how they provide the grammar, the symbolic and technical resources, as well as the texts and discourses, which shape the various academic debates.

He traces organization theory from roots in Saint-Simon and Weber through branches that reach to the modern day. The view of organiza- tions as rational instruments shaped the early days of the formal study of organizations. Subsequently, the rediscovery of community as the organic, humanistic side of organizations, Reed suggests, led to functionalist systems and contingency theories. A third narrative, one that emphasizes the market, characterizes organiza- tional economics and population ecology. In the fourth narrative, Reed reveals the many faces of power concealed in its less visible mechanisms and devices. The melding of knowledge and power, in the fifth narrative, illuminates the institutional biases that characterize all narra- tives and all theorizing. It highlights disciplinary power, embedded in micro-level routines and structures, and shows how the meanings which shape our identities, as observers of organiza- tional life as much as participants in it, emanate

from these micro-systems of power. The sixth narrative focuses on the societal, institutional structures that surround and penetrate organizations, as in institutional theory and globalization, allowing us to reconnect the local and the global. Reed then discusses how these rival explanatory claims deal with, and lead to, contests between agency and structure, epistemological battles, and conflicting demands for local or global levels of analysis.

Debate emerges at points of intersection between the narratives. But, as Burrell also elaborates in his chapter, while these narratives illuminate the intersection, they also cast into shadow other themes, such as gender, ethnicity, technoscience, and disparities in global development. Reed discusses how we might bring some light to those areas. Finally, he offers his own contribution to the 'incommensurability thesis' which is one of the enduring debates that mark academic discourse.

To emphasize the contested nature of the terrain surveyed by organization studies, the second chapter adopts a very different voice: when Lex Donaldson talks of structural contingency theory, he advocates paying more attention to 'normal science'. Eschewing the proliferation of paradigms, he argues that structural contingency theory provides a coherent approach to the study of organizations, one in which the accumulation of empirical results offers the prospect of consensus around the ways in which organizations structure and adapt to their environments. Donaldson discusses the origins of structural contingency theory, showing how different contingency variables have been studied, as well as introducing the model developed as a result of this work. The characteristics of the underlying research paradigm which Donaldson associates with normal science in organization theory are those of sociological functionalism. Donaldson argues that the rigorous and disciplined application of one 'scientific' approach to research enables development. Accordingly, Donaldson calls for a more focused approach to organization theory, one that revolves around structural contingency theory. Not for him the pursuit of newer theories, whatever they may contribute, because they can never supplant core theory applied to the key theme of organizational structure. This concept of organization structure is conceived in terms of variation around classical themes whose dimensions are redolent of 'bureaucratic' refrains, according to the Aston researchers (also see Donaldson 1995).

In his chapter, Joel Baum covers organizational ecology, by broadening the population ecology perspective to encompass related approaches. He first clarifies what organizational ecology is and is not, thus exposing some of the myths and misconceptions that have arisen. The focus is on recent work, especially with regard to organizational founding and failing, and to matters of organizational change. Like structural contingency theory, this approach to the study of organizations is one based on a normal science conception of the steady accumulation and building of empirically generated knowledge derived from a limited number of theoretical assumptions shared between a community of scholars. In a comprehensive review, Baum tracks recent results and thinking and notes the caveats and polemics characterizing this subject. Organizational ecology, as a recent development, represents an example of the proliferation resisted by some theorists (e.g. Pfeffer 1993; Donaldson 1985; 1995). While Baum clearly makes a case for a self-contained, growing field of inquiry or 'subdiscipline', as he calls it, he also communicates with other approaches, such as institutional theory, to show how one might complement the other.

Organizational economics, according to Jay Barney and William Hesterly, addresses four key questions: why organizations exist; how the firm should be managed; why some organizations outperform others; how firms can cooperate. Transaction cost theory has examined the relative costs of markets and hierarchies of alternative forms of governance. Managerial fiat offers distinct possibilities to counteract bounded rationality and opportunism. In the case of high uncertainty and transaction specific investment the organization offers advantages over the market. Applications of these ideas are to be found in the work on vertical integration and the multidivisional form. Agency theory examines differences between the principal (often shareholders) and the agent (usually management) concerning how the organization should be managed. Conflicting interests between these two groups open up possibilities for opportunism, especially on the part of the agent who often has recourse to information and knowledge. Work has examined the delegation of authority, monitoring mechanisms, and bonding and incentives. Strategic management concerns why some organizations outperform others. Research has focused on the effects of industry structure (turning the original intent, which was to help government regulators increase competition within an industry, on its head by focusing on how firms can develop strategies to reduce competition and earn above normal profits) and the resources and capabilities controlled by the firm. Finally, Barney and Hesterly examine cooperation between firms, including tacit collusion and strategic alliances. The latter are the more common and are

becoming an increasingly important feature of many economies as new organizational forms evolve as effective means to enter new markets.

Psychological approaches assume the central focus of Walter Nord and Suzy Fox's chapter. Noting that the study of psychological factors is, perhaps, more typical of organizational analysts in North America than elsewhere, they explore the work that has been carried out under the rubric of psychological approaches, tracing the origins in Taylorism and the human relations school, which took the individual as the unit of analysis, through to more recent variations in the form of human resource management, which emphasizes context. Despite the substantial interest in the essentialist characteristics and the traditional view of the human as a purposeful being who attempts to know and cope with an external reality, Nord and Fox find clues in a deeper analysis of this literature which support a more 'postmodern' reading of the individual. An emphasis on the centrality of 'the' individual has been countered by research that has focused on contextual factors that determine, or at least influence and constrain, individual behaviour; while feminist work has forced a rethinking of the psychology of gender. Such work questions the privileged place of the individual who apparently, even in psychological or 'micro' approaches, seems to be the subject of a 'great disappearing act', to the lamentation of some researchers, and apparent glee of others. Nord and Fox argue, however, that the disappearing act is itself a trick: the individual has not disappeared but continues to be a prime issue for some; while for others, through consideration of the context, the individual has been transformed. In fact, the move to reflexivity in organization studies offers possibilities for individuals to (re)create themselves in a variety of ways. The authors trace the move towards context-based analyses in industrial organization psychology, organizational behaviour and some portions of mainstream psychological literatures.

Institutional theory, reviewed by Pamela Tolbert and Lynne Zucker, is the theme of the next chapter. Ironically, they note the low degree of institutionalization of institutional theory as they describe the different techniques and approaches that characterize it. Contemporary institutional theory derives from an article by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that highlighted the symbolic properties of organization structure. Institutional theory draws from functionalist approaches that study how symbolic properties produce support from external interests which, in turn, help to safeguard organizational survival. The issue of institutional *processes* (rather than the characteristics or features of institutionalization) has become an important

focus of research in this area, and a number of researchers have turned their attention to how organizational domains become institutionalized. In addition, some researchers have examined the role of 'champions' in promoting and shaping processes of institutionalization. In this way, some institutionalists attribute more voluntarism and less determinism to these complex dynamics. Institutional theory is thus concerned with broadening its scope by tackling the issue of agency and the process of institutionalization, as well as accumulating and consolidating research on institutionalization as a property of a social system.

Mats Alvesson and Stanley Deetz take on a formidable body of work when they review both critical theory and postmodern approaches. They note their relatively recent adoption in organization studies. Using a model that classifies different theoretical perspectives according to the degree to which they emphasize dissensus or consensus, and the degree to which they privilege the local and emergent or the elite and *a priori*, the authors locate postmodernist and critical approaches in the broader context of organization studies. Both differ from normative and interpretative studies in terms of their emphasis on dissensus rather than consensus; they differ from each other in terms of postmodernism's local, and hence plural, focus against the elitist tendencies of critical theory. By breaking these dimensions into their constituent characteristics Alvesson and Deetz provide a helpful device for readers trying to make sense of these broad and multifaceted perspectives, as well as detailing some of the tensions that both divide and integrate them. Through their reading of more 'traditional' work on organizations, these contributors show how critical and postmodern approaches offer alternative and distinctive contributions to organization studies. Critical theory and postmodernism are both 'alike and different'. Both draw attention to the social, historical and political construction of knowledge, people and social relations. Alvesson and Deetz point to a future path that organization studies might tread, where critical theory and postmodernism go side by side, if not hand in hand. Without postmodernism, they counsel, critical theory becomes elitist and unreflective; without critical theory, postmodernism becomes esoteric. Together, with a renewed emphasis on empirical work, both offer new insights for emancipating people working in organizations.

Marta Calás and Linda Smircich provide a comprehensive review of a variety of feminist theories, showing how these approaches illuminate how both organizational practice and organizational theorization cloud our understanding of

'gender'. Feminist theories are not new: the authors trace liberal feminism back to the 1700s. But neither this lengthy tradition, nor the resurgence in interest in feminism since the 1960s, has solved the 'problems' that women face as members of society and organizations. As the authors point out, there remains sufficient inequity to justify a continuation of study into the role that women play and the challenges they face. There is, however, more to feminist approaches than this; feminist theories encompass more than women's 'problems'. Recent developments in feminist theorization help to surface the taken-for-granted assumptions that characterize organization theory and render gender and gendered identities invisible.

Calás and Smircich present seven different perspectives. Starting with liberal and psychoanalytic feminist theories, the authors argue convincingly that they are not enough. These approaches take the system of production for granted, make maleness the norm, and treat gender as a universal category. Marxist, radical and socialist feminist theory propose a more transformational overhaul of social institutions. Poststructuralist and postmodern approaches call into question not just 'society' but the very way we study it. They raise questions concerning essentialist notions of gender and offer insight into how gendered identities are crafted by individuals' experiences in organizational settings. Finally, Calás and Smircich draw our attention to (post)colonial feminist theorizations that seek to give voice to those who fall outside the parameters set by the predominantly white, often elite members of the developed world who dominate the world of organizations and of organization theory. This perhaps is the way forward for organization studies, as our interest in globalization draws us deeper into cultures and countries not normally visited and, consequently, closer to the people who populate them.

Reflections on Research, Theory and Practice

Ralph Stablein examines different kinds of data in organization studies. He notes that while data are central to our professional activities, agreement on what data are range from the dismissal of ethnographic data as stories, to the disparaging of survey data as simplistic and distorted, to the rejection of experimental data as unrealistic. He argues that we need a common definition of acceptable data which transcends the strictures of the qualitative/quantitative divide and which still does justice to the diversity of data that researchers collect and analyse. Stablein argues that confusion between ontology and epistemol-

ogy has hindered our ability to theorize about data. Data represent the empirical world, the one that we invent, rather than discover, through our research. Collecting data is, then, an epistemological project to find ways to represent the object of research, not an ontological question concerning the metaphysical world. The empirical world that we try to represent through the collection of data is what we, as a human scholarly community, understand and communicate at a particular point in space and time.

Having established data as central to epistemology, the key question becomes 'how do we (through data) know our world?' This process of representing the empirical world requires a two-way correspondence between it and the symbolic system used to represent it, regardless of whether those symbols are numbers to plug into a statistical package, words recorded from in-depth interviews, or pictures taken of artifacts scattered across the corporate landscape. In this regard, the set of symbols chosen is less important than agreement about investigation of the organizational phenomena. The first correspondence plots a particular part of the organization into a symbol system that reduces the complexity of the organizational phenomena under investigation. The researcher then uses the already understood, abstracted relationships between the symbols to learn about the organizational phenomena. The second correspondence thus requires, following such analysis, plotting *back* the rearranged symbols on to the original organization phenomena. From the quantitative side, it means that researchers must provide evidence of validity, that respondents replied to questions in the way that their data represent. From a qualitative perspective, it means that case studies written from ethnographic data convey the same meaning to interviewees. This model allows Stablein to compare many different kinds of data to evaluate whether or not they further the epistemological project regardless of the particular paradigm to which the research belongs.

Action research, suggest Colin Eden and Chris Huxham, represents a major bridge between theory and practice. They trace the historical context of this approach to research and develop a series of qualities that characterize exemplary action research. Included is the purpose of organizational change as well as the goals of generalization, theory development and pragmatic research. The authors also discuss the action research process and offer guidelines for designing and validating action research. Action research draws our attention to the role of the researcher, in a way not unlike the tenets more recently associated with postmodernism. It positions the researcher as investigator, subject

and consumer: the researcher is an active person with values, hopes, and goals, as one involved in the research. Although there is no myth of neutrality, the contributors warn against becoming seduced, at least unthinkingly, by managerial agendas.

Action research also emphasizes reflexivity, which here refers to 'some means of recording the reflection itself and the method for reflecting'. At the same time, the authors differentiate action research from postmodernism by dismissing the idea that any form of writing is acceptable. They maintain that the conventions discussed in the chapter are integral to what they constitute as action research. By respecting these conventions, action research can resist attempts by the academic 'marketplace' to co-opt it, for example, by demands for business sponsorship or the mingling of consultancy and research.

Stephen Fineman discusses emotion and organizing, pointing out that writers have been slow to incorporate emotions into their scholarly work. Fineman traces the historical work on emotion in psychology and organization studies (the latter usually using terms other than emotion). The overwhelming perspective in organization theory is that emotion is something to be 'managed' and suppressed. Some writers explore how emotions interfere with rationality, thus putting the organization on the couch, so to speak, to reveal and explain its shortcomings. Other writers have studied how emotional processes can serve rationality. A third approach explores how rational self-interest is thoroughly imbued with emotion.

Fineman goes on to clarify the concept of emotion and explores what it *feels* like. He then turns to emotions and organizational order, arguing that, if organizations are socially constructed, emotions are central to their construction. He discusses some of the emotions that are expressed in organizational contexts; shows how corporations often prescribe emotion, such as the smile at Walt Disney Productions, the cheery 'hello' of the flight attendant. Such emotional labour is built into many professional jobs where people are paid to be 'serious', 'sympathetic', 'objective', or 'friendly'. It can wreak considerable psychological damage but, at the same time, should the mask crack, as between say a doctor and a patient, the professional relationship is damaged. Consequently, there are often emotional 'zones', such as the galley in the aircraft, where protagonists are able to resist by expressing forbidden emotions. Fineman concludes his chapter with a discussion of some of the directions that the relatively recent interest in emotion might take and some of the challenges it faces.

In many respects, the chapter by Pasquale Gagliardi is an interesting companion to that by Stephen Fineman. Both seek to bring the 'whole' person to the centre stage of organizational analysis. As Fineman brings emotion to the research agenda, so Gagliardi brings the aesthetic side to life. He argues eloquently how organizations cultivate all of our senses: we don't just 'see' or 'know' organizations, we feel and experience them. Gagliardi makes claims for very different types of knowledge than conventionally considered: sensory knowledge (rather than intellectual knowledge); expressive forms of action; and forms of communication other than speech. He asks why we are reluctant to change our focus, and traces our silence on these matters back as far as Newton, who divided the stuff of the primary qualities of the physical world from the secondary qualities of the sensory, subjective world.

Pasquale Gagliardi draws on disciplines 'far' from the realm of traditional organization studies, such as history and aesthetics. He draws our attention to corporate landscapes, and the artifacts that are part of them, to show how sensory perception is an integral part of our life in organizations and how it can help us to reformulate the relations between ideas, images, identity, meaning and sensation. Gagliardi offers us an alternative to the analysis, calculation and logic with which we are probably most familiar; an alternative that relies more on synthesis, the recognition of the global context, and the overall form. As Gagliardi points out, it is not completely describable but, nonetheless, such ideas are integral to many of the new directions undertaken in organization studies, such as emotion (see the chapter by Fineman) or time (see the chapter by Hassard). There is, however, an inherent paradox in such an approach: 'can we study the products of the right side of the brain with the left?' Perhaps lessons present themselves from the study of art? Perhaps we must be more responsive to our own feelings if we are to comment on the feelings of others?

John Hassard examines how organization studies portray time and temporality. Many of us take time (or the lack of it) for granted, but the examination of the images and metaphors of time that emerge from social philosophy remind us that time is an elusive phenomenon. Time not only appears as objective, measurable, divisible, it is also valuable. Time is money! The apparent scarcity of time enhances its perceived value. Such a temporal concept of value is the link between time, pay, and the early time and motion studies of scientific management.

One legacy of the modern organization is the reification and commodification of time, whether in the form of flexi-time or other time-structur-

ing practices. Hassard argues that this linear-quantitative view of time requires closer scrutiny and that working time is a far richer, more complex phenomenon than is often portrayed. He revisits some of the more nuanced approaches to time in the work of Durkheim (1976), Sorokin and Merton (1937), and Gurvitch (1964) that provide a basis for cyclic-qualitative studies of time.

Classical studies of organization time exist: Hassard makes reference to studies such as Roy's (1960) 'banana time', Ditton's (1979) 'baking time', and Cavendish's (1982) 'doing time' to probe more deeply into the complexity of temporal structure and meaning. All these accounts draw our attention to the emptiness of time for employees and their attempts to fill this vacuum of boredom with something more meaningful. A discussion of Clarke's (1978) work on temporal repertoire shows how time frames in two different industries relate to the structures and cultures of the firm. In the final part of his chapter, Hassard looks at how we learn the meaning of time and uses the time frame of a career as an example. He then examines the three main time problems that organizations must solve: the reduction of temporal uncertainty; conflict over time; and scarce time.

The chapter by Joanne Martin and Peter Frost is not simply a summary of the work carried out on culture. Rather than promote a developmental argument showing how our understanding of culture has 'progressed' over the years, building and improving on earlier work, these authors tell a different story. It revolves around struggles that occur under the auspices of theoretical development and empirical testing. Accordingly, this chapter provides an example of some of the dynamics of theory building described in the earlier chapter by Reed, as well as the later ones by Burrell and by Marsden and Townley.

Martin and Frost argue that initial work on culture represented an opportunity to break with the constraints of dominant quantitative and positivistic approaches. 'Culture' allowed qualitative, ethnographic methodologies to acquire legitimacy. However, as the authors point out, these forays into new territory evoked new struggles: managerialist-oriented work was criticized for selling out; some qualitative work was proclaimed insufficiently 'deep'; the hermeneutic tradition was called into question for its neglect of political issues; and quantitative researchers began to reassert their control of empirical research. These different approaches to the study of organizational culture contributed much, but there is no clear, linear pattern of progress. More recently, postmodernism advises not bothering to look for progress. Yet, ironically, postmo-

dernism offers a way forward, whether we call it progress or not. While many of its advocates are as unequivocal in their support as its detractors are in their scepticism, others adopt a middle road (cf. Parker 1992). They see, as do we, that those developments labelled as 'postmodern' inject fresh insight, new ideas, and some excitement into organization studies. Martin and Frost agree and offer creative (although, for the aficionados, possibly modernist) suggestions as to how scholars of organization studies might expropriate postmodernism. As the authors show, the study of organizational culture could be (and in some cases already is) greatly enriched by postmodern thinking.

Cynthia Hardy and Stewart Clegg discuss the role of power in organizations. They contend that the plethora of conceptualizations of power has in many respects served to restrict our understanding. As Reed says in the opening chapter: power is the 'least understood concept in organization analysis'. Hardy and Clegg seek to clarify this confusion. Like other authors in the book, such as Burrell, and Marsden and Townley, they locate the classical heritage of power in the work of Marx and Weber, and note diverse readings of Weber proposed by different theories. In the context of functionalist organization theory, power vested in hierarchy is considered 'legitimate', 'formal' and functional. It disappears from the gaze of researchers who are much more interested in the dysfunctional, 'informal' and 'illegitimate' power that operates outside the hierarchy. In contrast to these functionalist researchers, who saw hierarchical power as non-problematic and in no need of explanations, critical theorists labelled the same phenomenon 'domination'. Both approaches could refer to different readings of Weber. The cleavage between focusing on power as illegitimate or legitimate continued as the former concentrated their study on strategies to defeat conflict, while the latter analysed strategies of domination. Researchers with the means to bridge the chasm seemed either to draw back at the precipice or find their voices too frail to be heard on the other side.

More recently, the two-way split has become a three-way break as the work of Foucault challenged the foundations of both critical and functional approaches. The result, argue the authors, is a curiously inactive conceptualization: we know more and more about the way power works *on* us but less and less about how we might make it work *for* us. Like Alvesson and Deetz, Hardy and Clegg see the way forward in a melding of critical and postmodernist thinking.

Gibson Burrell was a partner in a project that marks many of the chapters in this book, as co-author of *Sociological Paradigms and Organiza-*

tional Analysis. He revisits his earlier work in his chapter. He opposes those authors for whom the 'fragmentation' of organization studies warrants replacement by a nostalgic unity and argues that fragmentation has always characterized organization studies, contrasting different readings of Weber to illustrate the point. One reading of Weber, associated with Parsons and his colleagues in the United States, saw bureaucracy as an ideal, efficient form of organizing. It was this conceptualization, according to Burrell, that gave rise to the epistemological and methodological basis of the normal science approach. However, a second reading of Weber offered a more radical interpretation and provided, from the outset, an 'alternative' view of organizations. Hence, there was always a politics implicitly at work in any reading of Weber (as, for instance, in the sociological tradition that saw Weber's work as a counterpoint to that of Marx, one to which much organization theory seemed blind).

Burrell argues that the apparent consensus associated with the heyday of the Aston Studies, when the so-called dominant 'orthodoxy' prevailed on both sides of the Atlantic, was unusual. At that time, transatlantic convergence existed around a belief in welfarism, Keynesian economics, and defence spending spurred by the Cold War. They were the result of centrally planned, coordinated activities, which provided sustenance for normal science but which were unique to that particular historical period. Since then, things have changed. The nature of organizing moved from the bureaucratic to more exotic forms; the paradigm debate legitimated alternative modes of inquiry; and the work of Foucault and other postmodernists started to influence organizational scholars. Fragmentation is back for all to see.

Some contributors in this book try to build bridges over the troubled waters of fragmentation, while others, who once were warriors, seek always to be warriors. Unlikely bedfellows thus emerge. Donaldson and Burrell, for instance, are paradigm warriors both. Whereas Donaldson believes that virtue, identified with those 'truths' that he holds dear, will triumph, Burrell restates his support for paradigm incommensurability and for the continuance of the fragmentation with which it is associated. A debate characterizes the political strategies of many 'marginalized' groups: should one communicate with adversaries and try to influence them, or is dialogue, as Burrell argues, simply a weapon of the powerful? If so, should one exclude others? If the latter, then warfare, incommensurability and fragmentation are virtues in their own right. Oddly, both paradigm warriors seem to follow the same combat strategy, even though the terms that they defined differ so markedly.

Richard Marsden and Barbara Townley mirror some of Michael Reed's concerns, bringing the book to a full circle. They consider the link between theory and practice which, as they point out, is not as antithetical as might appear. Organization theory matters because it not only reflects organizational practice, but helps constitute it. In addition, as for many of our other contributors, there exists an academic politics of theory as there is a politics of organizational practice. They show how theory, even the sometimes esoteric discourse of postmodernism, nonetheless has important implications for organizational practice.

Marsden and Townley trace organizational theory back to Marx and Weber because their work is the 'stage upon which practitioners perform'. They show that both struggled with problems of modernity, such as the creation of the abstract citizen, which continue to occupy contemporary organization theorists. Like Burrell they show how theorizing and abstraction serve to divide our world up into the seen and the unseen; also, like Burrell, they point to the particularity in Weber's work that helped produce not only the Aston Studies, but also other traditions of normal science in the United States. The authors argue that these traditions of normal science do not serve practitioners well: research methods, rather than the problems and needs of managers, much less workers, drive the research agenda. They then introduce contra organization science, drawing on Silverman's early work, through Lukes's radical view of power, to the work of Foucault. This work, according to Marsden and Townley, has some potential for practice, although its aversion to anything tainted by empiricism has steered it away from organizational settings and into the relative safety of theoretical discourse. The potential, for both theory and practice, resides in our ability to transcend the debate between normal and contra science and to engage with the duality and ambiguity of organization life. They point to the contradiction of modernity: how it enriches as well as impoverishes, empowers and represses, organizes and atomizes, emphasizing the importance of understanding what it means to the person. As these authors conclude, the way forward is the ethical interrogation of experience in terms of what our practices mean to us and to others.

Finally, the volume concludes with a chapter on representation in which we explore particular themes that emerged from the chapters and engaged us. We are particularly interested in the way organization studies represent the subject: as individual and organization. By exploring issues of representation, we believe we can draw some insights for research, theory and practice in

organization studies as we move into the next century.

NOTES

We acknowledge the substantive comments that Walter Nord, Eduardo Ibarra-Colado, Peter Frost, John Gray and Sue Jones made on an earlier draft of this chapter.

1 Our comparison with the world thirty years ago is not coincidental: the *Handbook of Organizations* edited by James G. March was published in 1965. We do not consider the *Handbook of Organization Studies*, from which this volume derives, to be a successor, natural or otherwise, to March's book or other handbooks (e.g. Dunnette 1976; Nystrom and Starbuck 1980; Lorsch 1987), but we have often been asked how our *Handbook* compares with March's book. In most respects, we can only say that it does not, precisely because of the changes we mention here.

2 It is useful to differentiate between postmodernism as social theory, as described here, and the more empirically grounded hypothesis which argues that characteristics associated with the 'modern' era are being superseded by phenomena that are radically discontinuous and sufficiently distinct to be termed 'postmodern', thus constituting a new epoch of postmodernity (see Parker 1992). Some writers also distinguish between poststructuralism and postmodernism, seeing the former as particular approaches, within the broader arena of postmodernism, which focus on the link between language, subjectivity, social organization and power. Poststructuralism counters the idea that language *reflects* social reality, arguing that, by producing meaning, it *creates* social reality. Different languages and different discourses categorize the world and give it meaning. Thus language defines, constructs and contests social organization, power and our sense of selves, our subjectivity (see Richardson 1994: 518).

3 To be more specific, we refer to a community of researchers whose engagement in and exposure to conversations revolves around the concerns of various journals and institutions. Among the journals are *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *The Academy of Management Review*, *The Academy of Management Journal*, *Organization Studies*, *Organization Science*, *The Journal of Management Studies* and *Organization*. The institutions include the European Group for Organization Studies (EGOS), the Standing Conference on Organization Symbolism (SCOS), Asia Pacific Researchers in Organization Studies (APROS), the Organization and Management Theory (OMT) group of the (American) Academy of Management, Research Committee 17, Sociology of Organizations, of the International Sociological Association (ISA), and the 'Organization and Occupations' Committee of the American Sociological Association. It is from the

debates, scholars and community that comprise this 'invisible college' that we have woven the threads that bind this volume.

4 We would like to thank Eduaro Ibarra-Colado for helping to clarify the ideas in this paragraph.

5 Pfeffer (1995) appears to perceive a threat not from contra science but from rational choice theory, which we would classify as one among a number of normal sciences, while viewing Pfeffer as a practitioner of another. Interestingly, Donaldson (1995), an advocate of yet another form of normal science, contingency theory, makes a similar attack on other normal science approaches, notably organizational economics; population ecology; resource dependency; institutional theory. It may be that adherents of the different 'orthodox' approaches are starting to engage more directly in a struggle amongst themselves, somewhat like the paradigm warriors. There is a difference, however, in that the original paradigm warriors entered combat around the question of communication between their paradigms; they never disputed that alternative paradigms should exist, only whether they could or should talk to each other. The signs from these more recent battles suggest that orthodox warriors want *all* alternatives, save their own, closed out, even variations on the theme of normal science if they do not correspond to the chosen path. If Donaldson and Pfeffer have their way, there won't be anything left to constitute 'orthodoxy'!

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Part One
FRAMEWORKS
FOR ANALYSIS

1

Organizational Theorizing:
a Historically Contested Terrain

MICHAEL REED

Organization studies has its proximate historical roots in the socio-political writings of nineteenth century thinkers, such as Saint-Simon, who attempted to anticipate and interpret the nascent structural and ideological transformations wrought by industrial capitalism (Wolin 1961). The economic, social and political changes that capitalist-led modernization brought in its wake created a world that was fundamentally different from the relatively small-scale and simple forms of production and administration which had dominated earlier phases of capitalist development in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Bendix 1974). The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the growing dominance of large-scale organizational units in economic, social and political life as the complexity and intensity of collective activity moved beyond the administrative capacity of more personal and direct forms of coordination (Waldo 1948). Indeed, the rise of the 'administrative state' symbolized a new mode of governance in which rational, scientific organization transformed human nature:

> Organization as power over things – that was the lesson taught by Saint-Simon. The new order would be governed not by men but by 'scientific principles' based on the 'nature of things' and therefore absolutely independent of human will. In this way, organizational society promised the rule of scientific laws rather than men and the eventual disappearance of the political element entirely . . . [organization] is the 'grand device' for transforming human irrationalities into rational behaviour. (Wolin 1961: 378–83)

Thus, the historical roots of organization studies are deeply embedded in a body of writing which gathered momentum from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards and confidently anticipated the triumph of science over politics and the victory of rationally designed collective order and progress over human recalcitrance and irrationality (Reed 1985).

The growth of an 'organizational society' was synonymous with the inexorable advance of reason, liberation and justice and the eventual eradication of ignorance, coercion and poverty. Organizations were rationally designed to solve permanently the conflict between collective needs and individual wants that had bedevilled social progress since the days of Ancient Greece (Wolin 1961). They guaranteed social order and personal freedom by fusing collective decision-making and individual interest (Storing 1962) through the scientific design, implementation and maintenance of administrative structures that subsumed sectional interests within institutionalized collective goals. The perennial conflict between 'society' and 'individual' would be permanently overcome. Whereas Hegel had relied on the dialectic of history to eradicate social conflict (Plant 1973), organization theorists put their faith in modern organization as the universal solution to the problem of social order.

> [T]he organizationists looked upon society as an order of functions, a utilitarian construct of integrated activity, a means for focusing human energies in combined effort. Where the symbol of community was fraternity, the symbol of organization was power . . . organization signifies a method of social control, a means for imparting order, structure and regularity to society. (Wolin 1961: 363–4)

Viewed from the historical vantage point of the late twentieth century, however, the practice and study of organization look very different today. The earlier metanarratives of collective order and individual freedom through rational organization and material progress have fragmented and frayed into a cacophony of querulous 'voices' totally lacking in general moral force and analytical coherence (Reed 1992). The once seemingly cast-iron guarantee of material and social progress through sustained technological advance, modern organization and scientific administration now looks increasingly threadbare. Both the technical effectiveness and moral virtue of 'formal' or 'complex' organization are called into question by institutional and intellectual transformations which push inexorably towards social fragmentation, political disintegration and ethical relativism. Who amongst us can afford to ignore Bauman's argument that 'the typically modern, technological-bureaucratic patterns of action and the mentality they institutionalize, generate, sustain and reproduce' (1989: 75) were the sociopsychological foundations of and organizational preconditions for the Holocaust?

In short, contemporary students of organization find themselves at a historical juncture and in a social context where all the old ideological 'certainties' and technical 'fixes' that once underpinned their 'discipline' are under attack and seemingly on the retreat in the current debate over the nature of organization and the intellectual means most appropriate to its understanding (Reed and Hughes 1992). Underlying assumptions about the inherently rational and ethical quality of modern organization are challenged by alternative voices that radically undermine 'taken-for-granted' objectivity and goodness (Cooper and Burrell 1988). While key texts published in the 1950s and early 1960s bridled with self-confidence concerning their 'discipline's' intellectual identity and rationale (see Haire 1960; Argyris 1964; Blau and Scott 1963), this self-confidence simply drained away in the 1980s and 1990s, replaced by uncertain, complex and confused expectations concerning the nature and merits of organization studies.

In Kuhnian terms, we seem to be in a phase of 'revolutionary' rather than 'normal' science (Kuhn 1970). Normal science is dominated by puzzle-solving activity and incremental research programmes carried out with generally accepted and strongly institutionalized theoretical frameworks (Lakatos and Musgrave 1970). Revolutionary science occurs when 'domain assumptions' about subject matter, interpretative frameworks and knowledge are exposed to continuous critique and re-evaluation (Gouldner

1971). Research and analysis are shaped by the search for anomalies and contradictions within prevailing theoretical frameworks, generating an internal intellectual dynamic of theoretical struggle. It signifies a discipline racked by internal conflict and dissension over ideological and epistemological fundamentals whose various supporters occupy and represent different paradigmatic 'worlds' between which communication, much less mediation, becomes impossible (Kuhn 1970; Hassard 1990). Fragmentation and discontinuity become the dominant features of a field's identity and rationale, rather than the relative stability and cohesion characteristic of 'normal science' (Willmott 1993).

One, very potent, response to the divisive impact of the break with the functionalist/positivist orthodoxy is the retreat into a nostalgic yearning for past certainties and the communal comfort they once provided (Donaldson 1985). This 'conservative' reaction may also demand an enforced and tightly policed political consensus within the field to repair intellectual tissue scarred by decades of theoretical infighting and to re-establish the theoretical hegemony of a particular research paradigm (Pfeffer 1993). Both 'nostalgic' and 'political' forms of conservatism aim to resist the centripetal trends set in motion by intellectual struggle and to return to ideological and theoretical orthodoxy. A robust combination of 'back to basics' and 'paradigm enforcement' can be a very attractive option for those unsettled by the intellectual fermentation taking place in organization studies.

Rather than 'paradigm enforcement', others look towards 'paradigm proliferation' through the separate intellectual development and nurturing of distinctive approaches within different domains, uncontaminated by contact with competing, and often more entrenched, perspectives (Morgan 1986; Jackson and Carter 1991). This response to social change and intellectual upheaval provides intellectual sustenance for a 'serious playfulness' in organization studies where postmodern irony and humility replace the sanctimonious platitudes typical of a rational modernism that is incapable of seeing that 'objective truth is not the only game in town' (Gergen 1992).

If neither conservatism nor relativism appeals, a third option is to retell organization theory's history in ways that rediscover the analytical narratives and ethical discourses that shaped its development and legitimated its character (Reed 1992; Willmott 1993). Such approaches question both a return to fundamentals and an unrestrained celebration of discontinuity and diversity: neither intellectual surfing or free riding on the rising tide of relativism, nor

retreating into the cave of orthodoxy, are attractive futures for the study of organization. The former promises unrestrained intellectual freedom, but at the price of isolationism and fragmentation. The latter falls back on a worn and outmoded consensus, sustained through continuous intellectual surveillance and control.

This chapter adopts the third response. It attempts to reconstruct the history of organization theory's intellectual development in a way that balances social context with theoretical ideas, and structural conditions with conceptual innovation. It offers the prospect of rediscovering and renewing a sense of historical vision and contextual sensitivity which gives both 'society' and 'ideas' their just deserts. Neither the history of organization studies nor the way in which that history is told are neutral representations of past achievement. Indeed, any telling of history to support reconstructions of the present and visions of the future is a controversial and contested interpretation that is always open to refutation. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to map organizational theory as a historically contested terrain within which different languages, approaches and philosophies struggle for recognition and acceptance.

The next section examines theory making and development in organization studies as an intellectual activity which is necessarily implicated in the social and historical context in which it is made and remade. The chapter then examines six interpretative frameworks that have structured the field's development over the last century or so and the socio-historical contexts in which they attained a degree of, always contested, intellectual dominance. The penultimate section considers the most significant exclusions or silences that are evident in these major narrative traditions. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of future intellectual developments, set within the context provided by the narratives outlined earlier.

THEORIZING ORGANIZATION

This conception of organizational theorizing is based on Gouldner's view that both the process and the product of theorizing should be seen as a 'doing and a making by persons caught up in some specific historical era' (1980: 9). The theoretically informed analysis of and debate about organizations and organizing are outcomes of a precarious combination of individual vision and technical production located within a dynamic socio-historical context. As such, theory making is always liable to subvert institutionalized conventions that have petrified into unreflectively

accepted orthodoxies that can never be contained completely within established cognitive frames and conceptual parameters. However, the probability of specific theoretical initiatives metamorphosing into much more significant conceptual 'paradigm shifts' is largely dependent on their cumulative impact on the particular intellectual communities and traditions through which they are mediated and received (Willmott 1993). Thus, while theory making is always *potentially* subversive of the intellectual status quo, its actual impact is always refracted through existing knowledge/power relationships and the 'contextual receptiveness' of particular socio-historical conditions to specific intellectual developments (Toulmin 1972).

In short, theory making is a historically located intellectual practice directed at assembling and mobilizing ideational, material and institutional resources to legitimate certain knowledge claims and the political projects which flow from them. The intellectual and social contexts in which theoretical debate is embedded have a crucial bearing on the form and content of particular conceptual innovations as they struggle to attain a degree of support within the wider community (Clegg 1994; Thompson and McHugh 1990). As Bendix maintains, 'A study of ideas as weapons in the management of organizations could afford a better understanding of the relations between ideas and actions' (1974: xx).

It does not mean, however, that no recognized, collective basis exists on which contradictory knowledge claims can be evaluated. At any point in time, organization studies is constituted through shared lines of debate and dialogue which establish intellectual constraints and opportunities within which new contributions are assessed. Negotiated rules and norms are generated through which collective judgements concerning new and old work are made and a vocabulary and a grammar of organizational analysis emerge. This 'grounded rationality' (Reed 1993) may lack the universality associated, however mistakenly (Putnam 1978), with the 'hard' sciences but it nonetheless establishes an identifiable framework of procedures and practices 'that provide for their own relevant discourse about proof' (Thompson 1978: 205–6). Thus, organization theory is subject to shared, although revisable, methodological procedures through which reasoned judgements of competing interpretative frames and explanatory theories are negotiated and debated. The interaction and contestation of rival intellectual traditions imply the existence of negotiated, historicized, and contextualized understandings that make rational argumentation possible (Reed 1993).

Table 1   *Analytical narratives in organization analysis*

Meta-narrative interpretative framework	Major problematic	Illustrative/exemplary/ perspectives	Contextual transitions
Rationality	Order	Classical OT, scientific management, decision theory, Taylor, Fayol, Simon	*from* nightwatchman state *to* industrial state
Integration	Consensus	Human relations, neo-HR, functionalism, contingency/ systems theory. corporate culture, Durkheim, Barnard, Mayo, Parsons	*from* entrepreneurial capitalism *to* welfare capitalism
Market	Liberty	Theory of firm, institutional economics, transaction costs. agency theory, resource dependency, population ecology. liberal OT	*from* managerial capitalism *to* neo-liberal capitalism
Power	Domination	Neo-radical Weberians, critical/structural Marxism, labour process, institutional theory, Weber, Marx	*from* liberal collectivism *to* bargained corporatism
Knowledge	Control	Ethnomethod, organizational culture/symbol, poststructuralist, post-industrial. post-Fordist/ modern, Foucault, Garfinkel, actor-network theory	*from* industrialism/modernity *to* post-industrialism/postmodernity
Justice	Participation	Business ethics, morality and OB, industrial democracy, participation theory, critical theory, Habermas	*from* repressive *to* participatory democracy

The interpretative frameworks in Table 1 constitute the historically contested intellectual terrain on which organization analysis developed – a terrain which must be mapped and traversed in relation to the interplay between the procedural and contextual factors that shape the debates around and through which 'the field' emerged (Morgan and Stanley 1993). These frameworks have shaped the development of organization studies for a century or more by providing a grammar through which coherently structured narratives can be built and communicated; symbolic and technical resources through which the nature of organization can be debated; and a communal store of texts and discourses which mediate these debates for both specialist and lay audiences. They develop in a dialectical relationship with historical and social processes as loosely structured and contested ways of conceptualizing and debating key features of organization. Each is defined in relation to the central problematic around which it developed and the socio-historical context in which it was articulated. The discussion thus provides a grounded appreciation of the strategic analytical narratives through which the field of organization studies is constituted as a dynamic intellectual practice, permeated by theoretical controversies and ideological conflicts concerning the ways in which 'organization' can and ought to be.

RATIONALISM TRIUMPHANT

As Stretton argued, 'we take in rationality with our mother's milk' (1969: 406). Yet this belief in the naturalness of calculated ratiocination has definite historical and ideological roots. Saint-Simon (1958) has a very strong claim to being the first 'theorist of organization' to the extent that he 'was probably the first to note the rise of modern organizational patterns, identify some of their distinctive features, and insist on their prime significance for the emerging society . . .

the ground rules of modern society had been deeply altered and the deliberately conceived and planned organization was to play a new role in the world' (Gouldner 1959: 400–1). The belief that modern society is dominated by a 'logic of organization' recurs throughout the history of organization studies, promoting a principle of social organization in which rationally assigned technical function defines the socio-economic location, authority and behaviour of every individual, group and class. According to Saint-Simon, it provides a cast-iron defence against social conflict and political uncertainty in so far as it establishes a new structure of power based on technical expertise and its contribution to the smooth functioning of society, rather than on randomly allocated or 'anarchic' market advantages or birth privileges.

The organization as a rationally constructed artifice directed to the solution of collective problems of social order and administrative management is reflected in the writings of Taylor (1912), Fayol (1949), Urwick and Brech (1947) and Brech (1948). Such work advocates that the theory of organization 'has to do with the structure of co-ordination imposed upon the work division units of an enterprise . . . Work division is the foundation of organization; indeed, the reason for organization' (Gulick and Urwick 1937: 3). It legitimates the idea that society and its constituent organizational units will be managed through scientific laws of administration from which human emotions and values can be totally excluded (Waldo 1948). Epistemological principles and administrative techniques translate highly contestable, normative precepts into universal, objective, immutable, and hence unchallengeable, scientific laws. The 'rational individual is, and must be, an organized and institutionalized individual' (Simon 1957: 101–2). Human beings became 'raw material' transformed by modern organizational technologies into well-ordered, productive members of society unlikely to interfere with the long-term plans of ruling classes and elites. Thus social, political and moral problems could be transformed into engineering tasks amenable to technical solutions (Gouldner 1971). Modern organizations heralded the triumph of rational knowledge and technique over seemingly intractable human emotion and prejudice.

This model insinuated itself into the ideological core and theoretical fabric of organization studies in such a pervasive and natural manner that its identity and influence were virtually impossible to ascertain, much less question. As Gouldner (1959) argued, it prescribed a 'blueprint' for an authority structure where individuals and groups were required to follow certain laws. Principles of efficient and effective

functioning were promulgated as an axiom to direct all forms of organizational practice and analysis. It provided a universal characterization of the 'reality' of formal organization irrespective of time, place and situation. Once this blueprint was accepted, it legitimated a view of organizations as autonomous and independent social units, above and beyond the purview of moral evaluation and political debate (Gouldner 1971).

Although the 'age of organization' demanded a new professional hierarchy to meet the needs of a developing industrial society, superseding the claims of both moribund aristocracy and reactionary entrepreneurs, this view was profoundly anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian. A technically and administratively determined conception of hierarchy, subordination and authority had no truck with rising socio-political agitation based on notions of universal suffrage in either workplace or polity (Wolin 1961; Mouzelis 1967; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980). Rational bureaucratic organization was socially and morally legitimated as an indispensable form of organized power, based on objective technical functions and necessary for the efficient and effective functioning of a social order founded on rational-legal authority (Frug 1984; Presthus 1975).

These principles are deeply embedded in the epistemological and theoretical foundations of those analytical perspectives that constitute the conceptual core of organization studies. Taylor's 'scientific management' is directed towards a permanent monopolization of organizational knowledge through the rationalization of work performance and job design. As Merkle argues: 'Evolving beyond its technical and national origins, Taylorism became an important component of the philosophical outlook of modern industrial civilization, defining virtue as efficiency, establishing a new role for experts in production, and setting parameters for new patterns of social distribution' (1980: 62). As both ideology and practice, Taylorism was extremely hostile towards entrepreneurial theories of organization which focused on the legimatory and technical needs of a small elite (Bendix 1974; Rose 1975; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980). As Bendix stresses, 'the managerial ideologies of today are distinguished from the entrepreneurial ideologies of the past in that managerial ideologies are thought to aid employers or their agents in controlling and directing the activities of workers' (1974: 9).

Fayol's principles of organization, although modified by a perceptive awareness of the need for contextual adaptation and compromise, were driven by the need to construct an architecture of coordination and control to contain the inevitable disruption and conflict caused by 'infor-

mal' behaviour. 'Classical' organization theory is founded on the underlying belief that organization provides a principle of structural design and a practice of operational control which can be rationally determined and formalized in advance of actual performance. Indeed, it assumed that the latter automatically follows the design rationale and control instrumentation entailed in the organization's formal structure (Massie 1965).

While Simon's (1945) concept of 'bounded rationality' and theory of 'administrative behaviour' flow from a stinging critique of the excessive rationalism and formalism of classical management and organization theory, his ideas are framed within an approach which sees rational choice between clearly delineated options as the basis of all social action (March 1988). It reduces the vital 'interpretive work', done by individual and organizational actors, to a purely cognitive process dominated by standardized rules and operating programmes. Politics, culture, morality and history are significant by their absence from this model of 'bounded rationality'. Treated as random, extraneous variables beyond the influence, much less control, of rational cognitive processes and organizational procedures, they become analytically marginalized, left outside the conceptual parameters of Simon's preferred model.

Rationalism exerted a profound influence over the historical and conceptual development of organization analysis. It established a cognitive frame and research agenda which could not be ignored, even by those who wished to take a radically different line (Perrow 1986), and ideologically resonated with the development of political institutions and economic structures during the early and mid twentieth century, rendering the corporation and political state 'knowable'. It provided a representation of emerging organizational forms that legitimated their increasing power and influence as inevitable features of a long-term historical trajectory through discourses of rational technocratic administration and management (Ellul 1964; Gouldner 1976). It also 'lifted' the theory and practice of organizational management from an intuitive craft into a codified and analyzable body of knowledge that traded on the immensely powerful cultural capital and symbolism of 'science'.

Considered in these terms, rationalism established a conception of organization theory and analysis as an intellectual technology geared to the provision of a 'mechanism for rendering reality amenable to certain kinds of action . . . it involves inscribing reality into the calculations of government through a range of material and rather mundane techniques' (Rose and Miller

1990: 7). The 'organization' becomes a tool or instrument for the authorization and realization of collective goals through the design and management of structures directed to the administration and manipulation of organizational behaviour. Organizational decision-making rests on a rational analysis of all the options available, based on certified expert knowledge and deliberately oriented to the established legal apparatus. This 'logic of organization' became the guarantor of material advance, social progress and political order in modern industrial societies as they converged around a pattern of institutional development and governance through which the 'invisible hand of the market' was gradually replaced by the 'visible hand of organization'.

Despite the primary position of the rational framework in the development of organization theory, its ideological and intellectual dominance was never complete. It is always open to challenge by alternative narratives. Challengers often shared its ideological and political 'project', that of discovering a new source of authority and control within the processes and structures of modern organization, but used different discourses and practices to achieve it. In particular, many saw the rational framework's inability to deal with the dynamism and instability of complex organizations as a major failure. This growing sense of its conceptual and practical limitations and the utopian nature of the political project which it supported provided organicist thought with a intellectual and institutional space where it could prosper in a field of study previously held in the sway of mechanistic forms of discourse.

THE REDISCOVERY OF COMMUNITY

The substantive issue which most perplexed critics, from the 1930s and 1940s onwards, was the failure of rationalistic organization theory to address the problem of social integration and the implications for the maintenance of social order in a more unstable and uncertain world. This approach remained blind to the criticism that authority is ineffective without 'spontaneous or willing co-operation' (Bendix 1974). Critics, uneasy about the highly mechanistic and deterministic character of rationalism, emphasized both a practical and a theoretical need for an alternative foundation of contemporary managerial power and authority to that provided by formal organization design. Organicist thinking was also concerned with how modern organizations combine authority with a feeling of community among their members.

The mission of the organization is not only to supply goods and services, but fellowship as well. The confidence of the modern writer in the power of organization stems from a larger faith that the organization is man's rejoinder to his own mortality . . . In community and in organization modern man has fashioned substitute love-objects for the political. The quest for community has sought refuge from the notion of man as a political animal; the adoration of organization has been partially inspired by the hope of finding a new form of civility. (Wolin 1961: 368)

This issue is at the forefront of the emergence of a human relations perspective in organization analysis that sets itself apart, in terms of solutions if not problems, from the rational model.

The *Management and the Worker* monograph (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939) and the writings of Mayo (1933; 1945) thus accuse the rational tradition of ignoring the natural and evolutionary qualities of the new social forms which industrialization generated. The whole thrust of the human relations perspective is a view of social isolation and conflict as a symptom of social pathology and disease. The 'good' society and the effective organization are defined in relation to their capacity to facilitate and sustain the socio-psychological reality of spontaneous cooperation and social stability in the face of economic, political and technological changes that threaten the integration of the individual and group within the wider community.

Over a number of years, this conception of organizations as the intermediate social units which integrate individuals into modern industrial civilization, under the tutelage of a benevolent and socially skilled management, became institutionalized in such a way that it began to displace the predominant position held by exponents of the rational model (Child 1969; Nichols 1969; Bartell 1976; Thompson and McHugh 1990). It converged in more abstract and sociologically oriented theories of organization which held an elective affinity with the naturalistic and evolutionary predilections of the human relations school (Parsons 1956; Merton 1949; Selznick 1949; Blau 1955). Thus, the origins of organicist thought in organization studies lay in a belief that rationalism provided an extremely limited and often misleading vision of the 'realities' of organizational life (Gouldner 1959; Mouzelis 1967; Silverman 1970). It stressed mechanically imposed order and control instead of integration, interdependence and balance in organically developing social systems, each with a history and dynamic of its own. 'Interference' by external agents, such as the planned design of organizational structures, threatens the system's survival.

The organization as a social system facilitates the integration of individuals into the wider society and the adaptation of the latter to changing, and often highly volatile, sociotechnical conditions. This view is theoretically anticipated, in embryonic form, by Roethlisberger and Dickson, who talk of the industrial organization as a functioning social system striving for equilibrium with a dynamic environment (1939: 567). This conception draws on Pareto's (1935) theory of equilibrating social systems in which disparities in the rates of sociotechnical change and the imbalances which they generate in social organisms are automatically counteracted by internal responses that, over time, re-establish system equilibrium.

Organizational structures are viewed as spontaneously and homeostatically maintained. Changes in organizational patterns are considered as the result of cumulative, unplanned, adaptive responses to threats to the equilibrium of the system as a whole. Responses to problems are thought of as taking the form of crescively developed defence mechanisms and being importantly shaped by shared values which are deeply internalized in the members. The empirical focus is thus directed to the spontaneously emergent and normatively sanctioned structures in the organization. (Gouldner 1959: 405–6)

In this way, emergent processes, rather than planned structures, ensure long-term system stability and survival.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, this conception of organizations as social systems geared to the integrative and survival 'needs' of the larger societal orders of which they were constituent elements established itself as the dominant theoretical framework within organization analysis. It converged with theoretical movements in 'general systems theory', as originally developed in biology and physics (von Bertalanffy 1950; 1956), which provided considerable conceptual inspiration for the subsequent development of socio-technical systems theory (Miller and Rice 1967) and 'soft system' methodologies (Checkland 1994). It was, however, the structural-functionalist interpretation of the systems approach which assumed the intellectual 'pole position' within organization analysis and which was to dominate theoretical development and empirical research within the field between the 1950s and 1970s (Silverman 1970; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Reed 1985). Structural functionalism and its progeny, systems theory, provided an 'internalist' focus on organizational design with an 'externalist' concern with environmental uncertainty (Thompson 1967). The former highlighted the need for a minimum degree of stability and

security in long-term system survival; the latter exposed the underlying indeterminacy of organizational action in the face of environmental demands and threats beyond the organization's control. The key research issue which emerges from this synthesis of structural and environmental concerns is to establish those combinations of internal designs and external conditions which will facilitate long-term organizational stability and growth (Donaldson 1985).

Structural functionalism and systems theory also effectively 'depoliticized' the decision-making processes through which the appropriate functional fit between organization and environment was achieved. Certain 'functional imperatives', such as the need for long-term system equilibrium for survival, were assumed to impose themselves on all organizational actors, determining the design outcomes which their decision-making produced (Child 1972; 1973; Crozier and Friedberg 1980). This theoretical sleight of hand consigns political processes to the margins of organization analysis. In keeping with the wider ideological resonances of systems theory, it converts conflicts over valued means and ends into technical issues which can be 'solved' through effective system design and management. As Boguslaw (1965) indicates this conversion relies on a theoretical façade, not to say utopia, of value homogeneity in which the political realities of organizational change, and the strains and stresses they inevitably cause, are glossed as frictional elements in an otherwise perfectly functioning system. It also gels with the ideological and practical needs of a rising group of systems designers and managers who aspire to overall control within an increasingly differentiated and complex society.

Thus, the general enthusiasm with which systems theory was received by the organization studies community in the 1950s and 1960s reflected a wider renaissance of utopian thinking which presumed that the functional analysis of social systems would provide the intellectual foundations for a new science of society (Kumar 1978). The process of socio-organizational differentiation, perhaps with a helping hand from expert social engineers, would solve the problem of social order through naturally evolving structures capable of handling endemic, escalating tensions between institutional demands and individual interests. The conceit that society itself would solve the problem of social order depended on a 'domain assumption' that 'the whole of human history has a unique form, pattern, logic or meaning underlying the multitude of seemingly haphazard and unconnected events' (Sztompka 1993: 107). Functional systems analysis provided the theoretical key to

unlock the mysteries of this socio-historical development, enabling social and organizational scientists to predict, explain and control both its internal dynamics and its institutional consequences. While this view traded on a form of socio-organizational evolutionism and functionalism which had its roots in the writings of Comte, Saint-Simon and Durkheim (Weinberg 1969; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Smart 1992), it reached its apogee in the work of those social scientists who contributed to the development of the theory of industrial society in the 1950s and 1960s, and who displayed little, if any, of the historical circumspection and political sensitivity of their academic predecessors.

Consequently, the functionalist/systems orthodoxy which came to dominate, or at least structure, the intellectual practice and development of organization analysis between the 1940s and 1960s was merely one part of a much broader movement that resurrected the evolutionary form of the nineteenth century (Kumar 1978: 179–90). In organization theory, it reached its theoretical consummation in the development of 'contingency theory' between the late 1960s and early 1970s (Thompson 1967; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Woodward 1970; Pugh and Hickson 1976; Donaldson 1985). This approach exhibited all the intellectual virtues and vices of the larger theoretical tradition on which it drew for ideological and methodological inspiration. It also reinforced a managerialist ethic which presumed to solve, through expert social engineering and flexible organizational design (Gellner 1964; Giddens 1984), the fundamental institutional and political problems of modern industrial societies (Lipset 1960; Bell 1960; Galbraith 1969).

Yet, as the 1960s progressed the virtues of organicist thought were eclipsed by a growing appreciation of its vices, especially as social, economic and political realities refused to conform to the explanatory theories promulgated by this narrative. In time, alternative interpretative frameworks, grounded in very different historical and intellectual traditions, would emerge to challenge functionalism. Before we can consider these perspectives, however, we need to take stock of market-based theories of organization.

ENTER THE MARKET

Market-based theories of organization seem a contradiction in terms: if markets operate in the way specified by neo-classical economic theory, as perfectly functioning 'clearing mechanisms' balancing price and cost, there is no conceptual role or technical need for 'organization'. As